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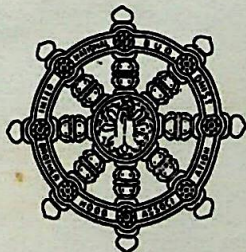
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Relevance of Buddhism & Other Religions in Modern Society

**Proceedings of the XXII International Conference
on Buddhist Studies in India, Nalanda**

December 09 and 10, 1997



Editors:

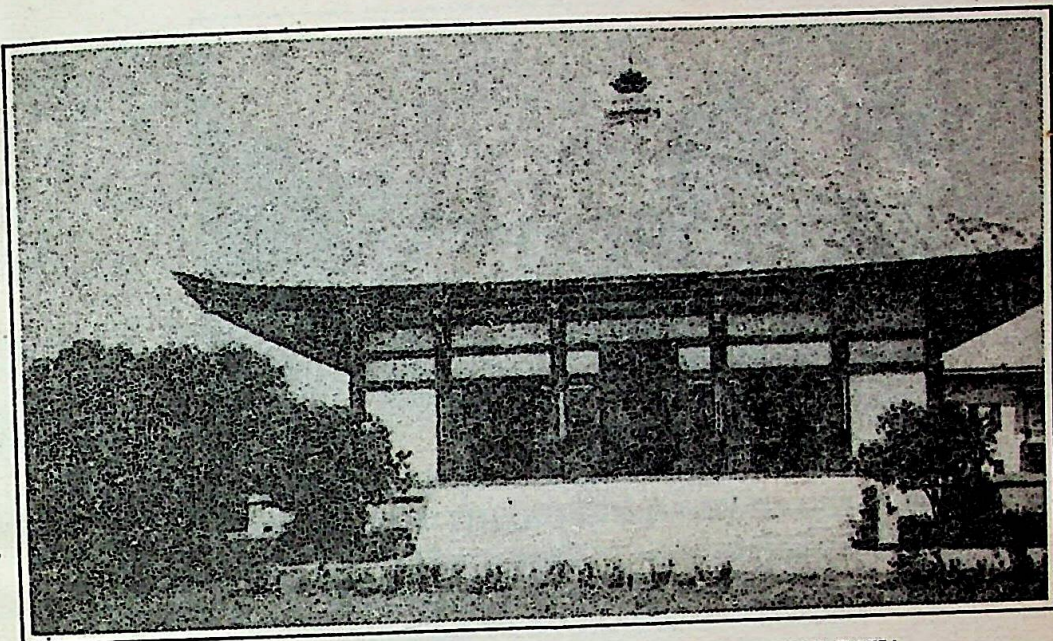
**en. Abiko Ken - etsu
Dipak Kumar Barua**

**NAVA NALANDA MAHAVIHARA, NALANDA
INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST BROTHERHOOD ASSOCIATION
INDOSAN NIPPONJI (Japanese Temple) Bodh - Gaya**

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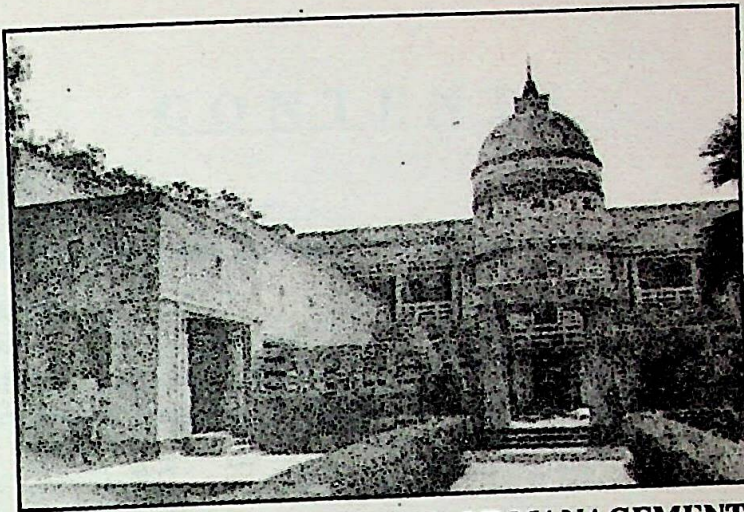
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RAJBHAVAN, PATNA
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FOREWORD

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce the proceedings of the XXII International Conference on "Relevance of Buddhism and other religions in Modern Society" organised under the auspices of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara in collaboration with the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association of India on 9th and 10th December, 1997 at Nalanda.

Nuclear holocaust and terrorism are posing perpetual threat to the mankind and the world is torn by fear and violence. The sublime message of Lord Buddha for universal peace and amity and its rational approach to the problems of life are still relevant. The need of his message of compassion and universal brotherhood was never greater than it is today. His principles of the Golden Mean are a valuable contribution to the world thought. His Middle Path meant avoiding all sins, acquiring all merit and purifying the mind which paves the way for attaining the highest bliss.

Buddha's message of peace, Ahimsa, sympathy and enlightenment conform to the strong moral and ethical basis of our society. Ahimsa is the most powerful weapon in the battle between the virtue and the vice. While Himsa complicates the problem, Ahimsa resolves it. Lord Buddha emphasised that the 'Life Within' should be properly purified so that it may bring about a constructive change in 'Life Without'.

Lord Buddha laid stress on reasoning and advocated that one should examine his strength and weakness on the basis of reasoning because reasoning distinguishes human beings from all other beings. Buddha's message is a silver lining in the midst of enveloping darkness the world is confronted today and the lamp of reason of which Lord Buddha has laid emphasis is the only weapon in the hands of mankind to guide its destiny and to achieve total emancipation from cosmic desires. So his philosophy and Middle Path enlighten the global community. Lord Buddha was of the view that a man devoid of compassion is dry dust which signifies nothing. Compassion is a silken tie which binds a heart with heart and mind with mind.

Proceedings of the XXII International Buddhist Conference represent a rich collection of articles presented by eminent scholars from India and abroad who participated in the conference. I hope this publication will be of great interest to those persons who are interested in the subject but could not attend the conference.

A.R. Kidwai
(A.R. KIDWAI)
Governor of Bihar

श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः
वाराणसी
संस्कृत



FOREWORD

It gives me immense pleasure to place at the disposal of the
XXI International Conference on "Religion of India and the
World" a volume of the "Religion of India and the World" series.
The volume is a collection of the papers presented at the
Conference of India on 20 and 21 December 1974 at Varanasi.

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श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः
वाराणसी
संस्कृत

of. N.C.Parashar



Education

मन्त्री,

हिमाचल प्रदेश,

शिमला-171 002.

MESSAGE

It is a matter of great happiness that International Buddhist Association and the Nav Nalanda Mahavihara, are organising the XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India on the theme Relevance of "Buddhism and other Religions in Modern Society" on 09th December, 1997. The holdings of these Conferences for the last over two decades has been a matter of great inspiration for Buddhist Scholars of the Country.

The theme of the present Conference is highly significant, as Buddhism and other religions have a special role to play in modern times. Ven. S.Iwaya the founder President of the International Buddhist Association has indeed done a great service to Buddhism by starting these Conferences and they have proved highly successful by attracting eminent scholars, from all parts of India and also from Foreign Countries. The Nalanda Mahavihara has indeed a great role to play for the future. The continued guidance of Dr. A.R.Kidwai, Hon'ble Governor of Bihar, has added its own grace to the Conference at Nalanda.

Narain Chand Parashar
(Narain Chand Parashar)

Education

Page 1

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MESSAGE

It is a great pleasure to participate in the inauguration of the 10th International Conference on the History of Education in India, which is being held at the Indian Institute of Education, Delhi, from 1st to 5th December 1971. The theme of the conference is "History of Education in India: A New Perspective". The conference is being organized by the Indian Institute of Education, Delhi, and the Ministry of Education, Government of India. The conference is a unique opportunity for scholars and researchers in the field of the history of education to meet and discuss the latest developments in the field. The conference is being held at the Indian Institute of Education, Delhi, which is a premier institution for the study and research in the field of education. The conference is being held at a time when the field of the history of education is experiencing a renaissance. The conference is being held at a time when the field of the history of education is experiencing a renaissance. The conference is being held at a time when the field of the history of education is experiencing a renaissance.

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(Signature)
(Name and Designation)



Address by Dr. A. R. Kidwai, Governor of Bihar



Vote of Thanks by Ven. Abiko Ken-etsu



Presentation of Gift by Governor Dr. A. R. Kidwai to the President Ven. Kawai Kyoshun



Inaugural address by the President Ven. Kawai Kyoshun



Memorial Group Photo of Bodh Gaya



Inauguration Function of the Conference of Nalanda

EDITORIAL NOTE

Ven. Abiko Ken-etsu
Dipak Kumar Barua
Editors

On the focal theme **RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN INDIA** the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara in collaboration with the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association had arranged on December 09 and 10, 1997 in the campus of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, to commemorate the 50th Year of India's independence, the XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India which is a continuation of the last twenty-one International Buddhist Conferences organised solely, save that of 1996, by the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association at the Indosan Nipponji (Japanese Temple) at Bodh-Gaya.

The present publication is an attempt to present to the reading public some of the papers which were read in the conference and received later by the organisers till March 31, 1998. This humble anthology of papers consists of three parts, namely, Part One contains Foreword, Message and Editorial Note; Part Two contains five addresses delivered in the Inauguration of and Report on the Conference, and Part Three includes some select papers in English and Hindi. The opinions expressed in these papers are of the writers. The Editorial Board is not responsible for any individual observation.

Inspite of the lack of infrastructural facilities the organisers tried their level best to serve the learned scholars and participants who had come from distant parts of India as well as from other countries and were accommodated in the Government Tourist Bungalow at Rajgir about 15 kilometers from the venue of the Conference, with the gracious assistance and co-operation received from the Governments of India and Bihar, Nalanda District Administration, people of Nalanda and all the staff-members of the International

Buddhist Brotherhood Association (I.B.B.A.) and Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (N.N.M.) This International Conference once again demonstrates the possibilities of India-Japan co-operation in the area of learning and culture.

In this Golden Jubilee Year of Indian independence, a new hostel named **Śīlabhadra-Ārāma** for the students and scholars of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara was dedicated to the Nation by His Excellency Dr. A.R. Kidwai, Governor of Bihar, and Chancellor of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, after the inauguration ceremony of the International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India. Its construction work was completed especially when our teaching and research standards are being compared not only with those of India but also with those of other countries of the world so far studies in Pali and Buddhist Culture are concerned. The Nava Nalanda Mahavihara is gradually developing its physical infrastructure. We are confident that the Mahavihara will further be able to provide better facilities to the students and scholars in the times to come as it is an organisation which is prepared to give a fitting response to the challenges in the changed environment and is looking forward to entering the 21st century with renewed vigour and competitive enthusiasm.

Nalanda

February 21, 1998

★ ★ ★

NAVA NALANDA MAHAVIHARA

A BRIEF SURVEY

The place called Nalanda situated about 95 kms. to the south-east of Patna, the metropolis of the State of Bihar, has a glorious past. It is hallowed by the memories of Buddha and his two chief disciples, Sāriputra and Maudgalyāyana. Lord Mahavīra also visited Nalanda off and on. In course of time a Vihara or Buddhist monastery was established here for the monks who used to visit the place for a short while. Gradually this small monastic abode turned into an academic institution of international repute under the royal patronage of the Guptas. King Harsavardhana of Kanauj and King Yaśovarmadeva of Central India also lavished their royal bounties on the Nālandā Mahāvihāra. The former was a great admirer of the most illustrious of the Chinese Travellers, Hiuen-tsang, who studied here for about six years. The cultural legacy of Nalanda was lastly taken over by the Pāla Kings of Eastern India, who promoted it for several centuries.

Hence Nalanda with its rich legacy has been able to achieve a great success in enriching and disseminating Indian Culture, especially Buddhist ideology in the Asian countries like Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Combodia, Laos, Vietnam. Even at present, the very name of Nalanda is a living source of inspiration in those countries, since they are conscious of the contributions of Nalanda towards the growth and development of thier culture, literature, and spiritual heritage, and they are anxious to see Nalanda once more restored to its pristine glory.

In India too, when nationalism became the leading force for freedom, attempts were being made to uphold everything Indian, whether of the past or of the present. The Nava Nalanda Mahavihara is the outcome of that very endeavour. It so happened that its Founder-Director Ven. Bhikshu Jagadish Kashyap, who had shifted his place of activity from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, to Nalanda, had started teaching Pali in the local Nalanda

College, Biharsharif, at the undergraduate level. It was just a coincidence that Ven. Kashyap was included in the entourage of His Excellency Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the First President of the Republic of India, on his visit to Burma now called Myanmar, (Burma). Overwhelmed by the rousing reception and profound reverence shown there to the modern Missiory of Buddha's Dhamma from India His Excellency Dr. Rajendra Prasad proclaimed to revive the ancient seat of Buddhist learning at Nalanda. Accordingly the then Chief Minister of Bihar Hon'ble Dr. Shrikrishna Sinha approved a plan for establishing a number of research institutes visioned by the then Education Secretary, Sri J.C. Mathur, I.C.S. who was encouraged by the then Education Minister Hon'ble Acharya Badri Nath Verma. Thus at the instance of the late Ven. Bhikkhu Jagadish Kashyap the Government of Bihar established "Magadh Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Pali and Allied Language and Buddhist Learning" presently known as Nava Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda. The idea behind the establishment of this Mahavihara was to develop it into a centre of higher studies in Pali and Buddhism on the lines of an old Vihara.

Nalanda still the name of the rural area between the ruins of the ancient Nālandā Mahāvihāra on the one hand and the Nalanda railway station on the other. It was, therefore, natural that at the early stage the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara started functioning in a small bungalow at Rajgir with Ven. Bhikshu Jagadish Kashyap as its Founder-Director and a Tibetan Lāma, a Hindu sannyasi, a Japanese Buddhist scholar, a French Buddhist monk and few monk teachers as members of the faculty. The Mahavihara was shifted to Nalanda in 1953 in a rented house in the village Kapatia till its first building came up.

The site of the Mahavihara was finally settled on a plot of land measuring seven acres and ninety three decimals donated by a generous Muslim Zamindar of Islampur of Nalanda district Janab Chaudhary Johoor by name. It is on the southern bank of a historical lake named Indrapuṣkaraṇī, very close to its northern bank lying the ruins of the ancient Siri Nālandā Mahāvihāra.

The foundation-stone of the first building was laid on the aforesaid site by his Excellency Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of the Republic of India, on November 20, 1951. This building, on its completion, was formally inaugurated by His Excellency Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of the Republic of India, on March 20, 1956.

The foundation of an international hostel now known as Silbhadra-Arama was laid by the then President of the Republic of India His Excellency Sri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy on January 20, 1981. After its completion by the Central Public Works Department of the Government of India, at Patna, it was ceremoniously inaugurated by His Excellency Dr. A. R. Kidwai, Governor of Bihar, on December 09, 1997.

Ven. Bhikshu Jagadish Kashyap remained as its Founder-Director from August 1, 1951 to February 28, 1955. The arduous task of bringing out a critical edition of the entire Pali *Tipiṭaka* in the Devanagari Script was taken over by him when he became the Honorary Director of the Mahavihara. Under guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Satkari Mookerjee, who joined as the Director of the Mahavihara on March 01, 1955, the first three research publications of the Mahavihara were published.

Ven. Bhikshu Jagadish Kashyap again joined the Mahavihara as its Director on July 08, 1965. The year 1973 is marked with the opening of post-graduate teaching in two more subjects, viz. Philosophy and Ancient Indian & Asian Studies. The Silver Jubilee Year of the Mahavihara was observed in 1976. As a part of the celebration *Nalanda : Past and Present*, a work of about 200 pages, was edited and published by Dr. C.S. Upasak, Director of the Mahavihara.

The Mahavihara hosted the second conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Wisconsin, U.S.A. in 1980 from January 17 to 19. About 150 delegates from 15 countries of the five continents participated in the deliberations of the Conference, details of which are recorded in the proceedings and papers of the Conference published under the banner of the Mahavihara and the International Association of Buddhist Studies.

From the very inception till March 31, 1981 the Mahavihara functioned as a state Government institution under the Director of Education, Government of Bihar. In order to give the Mahavihara freedom in planning its own developmental schemes and their execution, the Government of Bihar granted it autonomy by its Resolution No. 574 dated. April 30, 1981.

However, considering the glorious past, the esteem and reverence the place still commands from the Asian countries, immense possibilities of developing it into an institution of international importance and its future role as the Ambassador of peace and harmony to the countries of Asia, the Government of Bihar decided to hand it over the Government of India by its Resolution No. 996 dated December 04, 1990. This proposal gradually materialised as the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India, took over it with full financial liabilities from February 25, 1994. Now the Mahavihara is a registered Society under the Society Registration Act XXI, 1860 to fulfill the prescribed aims and objectives.

The Mahavihara is affiliated to Magadh University, Bodh Gaya, for M.A., Ph.D. and D.Litt. Degrees in Pali, Philosophy and Ancient Indian & Asian Studies and to Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University, Darbhanga, for Acharya Degree in Pali.

The following courses are pursued at present at the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda :

- (a) **Certificate Course in Pali** : This Course is of one year duration. The Mahavihara conducts the final examination by the end of the session.
- (b) **Diploma Course in Pali** : This Course is after the successful completion of the Certificate Course in Pali of the Mahavihara, also of one year duration. The Mahavihara conducts the final examination by the end of the session.
- (c) **Acharya Course in Pali** : Acharya course in Pali is the two year duration and it consists of eight papers, each carrying 100 marks. At the end of the second year, the students are sent up for the Acharya examination in Pali of the Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit

University, Darbhanga and the University awards the degree of 'Pālyāchārya' to the successful candidates.

- (d) Besides, the Mahavihara provides facilities for teaching Sanskrit, Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan and English to its post-graduate students.
- (e) **M.A. Courses in Pali, Philosophy, & Ancient Indian & Asian Studies :** As already mentioned, the Mahavihara follows the rules of the Magadh University, Bodh Gaya. The M.A. course in any subject is of two years' duration and consists of eight papers, each carrying 100 marks.

ADMISSION TO

- (a) **Certificate Course in Pali :** A candidate who has passed 10+2 i.e. I.A. or Higher Secondary or any other equivalent ecclesiastical examination from a recognised Board/Council in India or abroad is eligible for admission to this course after qualifying in the Admission/Proficiency Test arranged by the Mahavihara.
- (b) **Diploma Course in Pali :** A candidate who has passed the Certificate Course in Pali of the Mahavihara or a candidate possessing an equivalent Indian oriental degree in Pali or any other equivalent oriental degree in Pali from countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Bangladesh etc. will be eligible for admission in this course after qualifying in the Admission/Proficiency Test arranged by the Mahavihara.
- (c) **Acharya Course in Pali :** A candidate possessing the Diploma of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, or B.A. with Pali as one of his subjects from any Indian or foreign University or possessing the degree of Pandit Parikkha in Pali of Sri Lanka or Pathamagyi Examination in Pali of Myanmar or Pali Grade III of the Pali Examination Bureau of the Thai Saṅgha or Mahapatiyatti Uttamavijja of Buddhika Vityalaya of Combodia or Sanskrit Acharya of K.S.D.

Sanskrit University, Darbhanga, or Visārada of West Bengal or Upādhi of Assam Sanskrit Association or Upādhi of Bangladesh in any of the Pali TIPITAKAS or any equivalent oriental degree of recognised Board/Association/Council/University is eligible for admission to this course after qualifying in the Admission/Proficiency Test conducted by the Mahavihara.

- (d) **M.A. Courses in Pali, Philosophy and Ancient Indian & Asian Studies :** A candidate possessing Acharya degree in Pali of K.S.D. Sanskrit University, Darbhanga, or B.A. (Hons.) degree in Pali from an Indian or foreign University is eligible for admission to M.A. course in Pali.

Similarly, candidates possessing B.A. (Hons.) degree in Philosophy and B.A. (Hons.) degree in Ancient Indian and Asian Studies or Ancient Indian History and Culture from an Indian or foreign University are eligible for admission to M.A. Course in Philosophy and Ancient Indian and Asian Studies respectively.

The eligible applicants will also have to qualify in the Admission/Proficiency Test conducted by the Mahavihara.

Graduate of foreign Universities, before seeking admission, should ascertain whether the degree which they possess is equivalent to the prescribed qualification for admission to that particular course.

- (e) **Admission for Ph.D. and D.Litt. Degrees :** A candidate must possess at least second class M.A. degree with at least 50% marks of an Indian University or equivalent degree of any recognised foreign University in the relevant subject. Subject or topic taken up for research must be based on some branches of Pali, Buddhistic Studies, Ancient Indian History & Culture, Philosophy, Ancient History of South-East Asian countries. A synopsis of the topic duly approved by the proposed supervisor should be attached with the application for admission. The candidates seeking admission for Ph.D. Degree will also have to qualify in the Admission/Proficiency test conducted by the Mahavihara.

A candidate seeking admission to the D.Litt. Degree must possess Ph.D. Degree in the discipline he/she wants to carry on research work. However, a candidate seeking admission for D. Litt. Degree need not appear in any Admission Test, but he/she will have to pass the viva-voce test to be arranged by the Mahāvihāra.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The normal working hours of the Mahāvihāra are between 10.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. from July 01 to March 31 and between 7.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon on all Saturdays and from April 01 to June 30. Throughout the year classes are held on all Saturdays between 7.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. Classes are of one hour duration, i.e. 60 minutes. The teaching departments have Summer Recess of 45 days, i.e. from May 15 to June 30 and Autumn Recess of 15 days in September/October. The administrative departments avail of the prescribed holidays only.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

The subjects of research and publication of the Mahāvihāra are Pali Language and literature, Buddhist philosophy, cultural, social and religious history of Buddhist countries of South-East Asia and any other topic having a bias towards Buddhist culture and learning.

Up till now more than 75 research scholars, both Indian and foreign, have successfully been able to complete their thesis for Ph.D. and D.Litt. Degrees. Among the foreign research scholars mention may be made of Rev. Thich-Minh-Chau and Thich-Huyen-Vi of South Vietnam whose theses have already been published. At present nearly a dozen research scholars are engaged in the preparation of their theses of different topics of Buddhism under the supervision of the teachers of the Mahāvihāra for their Ph.D. Degree.

So far as publication is concerned, the Mahāvihāra published the entire Pali *Tiṭṭaka* in 41 volumes in Devanagari Script for the first time under the General Editorship of Late Ven. Bhikshu Jagadish Kashyap, the Founder-Director of the Mahāvihāra. Besides, four *Nava Nalanda Mahāvihāra Research Volumes*, *Nalanda : Past & Present*, *Homage to Bhikkhu J. Kashyap*, *Mahavasmsatika*, *A catalogue of the Lhasa Edition of Bkash-Hgyur of Tibetan*

Tripitaka Vol. I, Proceedings of the Second Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Wisconsin, U.S.A.), *Sasabavamsa* and about 30 volumes of the Pali *Atthakathās* for the first time in Devanagari Script - Nava Nalanda Mahavihara : A sketch (1996, 1997), *Buddhism and Humanis : Proceedings of the XXI International Buddhist Conference* (1996), Nava Nalanda Mahavihara : At a glance (1997) are some of the valuable publications of the Mahāvihāra.

LIBRARY

The Library of the Mahāvihāra at present possesses 36,472 entries including 160 MSS.

The library of the Mahāvihāra was enriched both in quantity and quality in a very short period as it got an opportunity to purchase personal libraries

- (i) of late Rash Bihari Mukherjee, a landlord of Uttarpara, Hooghly, West Bengal, and
- (ii) of Prof. (Dr.) Nalinaksha Dutt, Former University Professor and Head of the Department of Pali, University of Calcutta.

The personal library of Prof. (Dr.) K. Venkatramman, Former Director, China Bhavan, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, West Bengal was donated to the Mahavihara.

The books of the Wheat Loan Collection obtained as donation through the good office of the Government of the U.S.A. are not less important as they consist of, besides valuable dictionaries, encyclopaedia, cyclopaedia, journals and other reference books, a good collection of premier books on modern thoughts, i.e. books on psychology, metaphysics, ethics, logic, sociology, cultural anthropology etc.

The Buddhist countries were also not less enthusiastic in this pious work. The countries like Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Thailand and Kampuchea (Cambodia), making available a complete set of the Pali *Tripitaka* published in their respective scripts, presented the *Atthakathās* on them and other miscellaneous works to the Mahāvihāra. The books donated by Japan and South Korea also gave a new dimension to the library of the Mahāvihāra. Besides, a complete set of the Chinese *Tripitaka* and other miscellaneous works presented by the Peoples' Republic of China, a complete

set of *Kanjur* and *Tanjur* donated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet, a complete set of the Tibetan *Tripitaka* (Peking edition) with its Catalogue, Derge and Lhasa editions of *Kanjur* and Derge as well as a Nar-thang editions of *Tanjur* are the invaluable treasures of the library of the Mahāvihāra.

With a view to keeping the knowledge of research fresh and up to date the Library of the Mahāvihāra has been subscribing, since its very inception, research journals and periodicals of repute related to indology in general and Buddhist learning in particular, both Indian and foreign.

SPECIAL CONVOCATIONS

From time to time, Nava Nalanda Mahāvihāra have been conferring the Degree of VIDYĀ VĀRIDHI equivalent to D.Litt. Degree Honoris Causa to eminent scholars and social workers who have devoted their lives to the cause of Pali and Buddhist Culture.

The Mahāvihāra conferred the Degree of Vidyā Vāridhi to His Highness Prince Vongsavong of Laos in its first convocation held on 1966. This was in fact, done at the instance of the Government of India in accordance with the desire of the Prince himself who preferred the degree of Nalanda. Since then the Mahāvihāra has convened 13 such convocations, the last being held in the year 1983. The number of great personalities honoured so far is 52.

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

The Mahāvihāra also organises Seminars and Conferences from time to time. An Inter-University Debate was organised on the eve of the 2500 Buddha Jayanti in 1956. An Asian Seminar on Pali Studies was held in 1967 during the time of Ven. Bhikkhu Jagadish Kashyap as its Director. A meditation camp was organised at the Mahāvihāra when Dr. N. Tatia was its Director. The Silver Jubilee Celebration was performed with due pomp and grandeur in 1976. The second Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Wisconsin, U.S.A.) was organised by the Mahavihara from January 17 to 19 in 1980. Ven. Bhikshu Jagadish Kashyap Memorial Lectures, which commenced in the year 1980, is being organised every year in the month of May, preferably on the 2nd, the birthday of the Founder-Director Late Ven. Bhikshu Jagadish Kashyap. The XXI International Buddhist Con-

ference and XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India were organised by the Mahāvihāra in collaboration with the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Bodh Gaya on December 09 and 10, 1996 and December 09 and 10, 1997 respectively at Nalanda under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Dipak Kumar Barua, Director of the Mahavihara.

Apart from these every year seminars and symposiums are organised on different aspects of Pali and Buddhist Culture by the Mahavihara on the occasions of Buddha Jayanti, Ven. Bhikshu Jagdish Kashyap's birth-day, Tagore's birth anniversary. In these seminars students especially foreign ones are encouraged to present their papers. The Water Sprinkle Ceremony of Myanmar Thailand and of other south-east Asian countries in also being observed by the students and teachers of the Mahavihara.

FUTURE PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

The plan of the Mahāvihāra is to revamp and tone up the existing courses of study and to develop infrastructural facilities so that academic activities like teaching, research and publication may be carried on smoothly. The developmental work in the campus and in the residential complex are going on. The Mahāvihāra is to be integrated with Hsuang Tsang Memorial Hall and to be developed on the pattern of a University. While the Mahāvihāra will maintain its present character, the Memorial Hall will be developed into another campus.

The reprinting of the complete set of the Pali *Tipiṭaka* in the Devanagari Script is under process. No Hindi translation of the complete set of the *Tipiṭaka* has been done till today. There is a plan to undertake the project of translating the complete set of the Pali *Tipiṭaka* into Hindi. A good number of the Pali *Aṭṭhakathās* on the Pali *Tipiṭaka* have already been published by the Mahāvihāra in the Devanagari Script and some of the rest are in process and accordingly will come out soon.

All these plans cannot be materialised unless enough accomodation to work and necessary infrastructural facilities are available. It is envisaged to prepare a blue print for constructing new faculty building, library building with computer facilities, administrative building, hospital, auditorium, sports complex and staff quarters in the near future.



ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST BROTHERHOOD ASSOCIATION

Ven. ABIKO Ken-etsu

Director

Department of Cultural Affairs, IBBA

The International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, KOKUSAI BUKKYO KORYU KYOKAI in Japanese, the owning body of INDOSAN NIPPONJI (Japanese Temple), Bodh-Gaya, was established in 1968, as the synthetic society of all Japanese Buddhist Sects and Schools. It is registered at the Ministry of Education, Government of Japan, as juridical foundation, and its sister society IBBA of India was registered to the government of Bihar in 1986 under the Society Registration Act of India, with the aim and form of religious welfare foundation for organization of its activities.

The first project of the IBBA was to build the International Buddhist House at Bodh-Gaya, which was completed in February 1970.

The INDOSAN NIPPONJI (Japanese Temple) which formed the second step of the project, was completed in November 1973, and was formally inaugurated by His Excellency V.V. Giri, the then President of India, in December 1973.

As its third step, the construction of the Kindergarten attached to the Japanese Temple was completed in February 1977 and started functioning from 15 September 1977 on a trial basis with forty children. This kindergarten is a gift from the children and their father and mother of All Japan Buddhist Nursery and Kindergarten Association to Indian children.

Now it trains 190 children, in three years courses, from 3 years old to 5 years old. Well experienced five teachers are giving nursery pre-school

education, such as language, music and rhythm, paper work, painting, manual arts, and so on. Children have facility of medical check, uniforms, educational materials, lunch and milk, and other necessities. Those are all provided by the Japanese Temple in free.

The forth is a free clinic, KOMYO FREE MEDICAL CENTRE called in Japanese, charitable dispensary, which runs on a regular basis with all Indian staff and equipments. The dispensary was constructed by All Japan Buddhist Women's Association in 1984. But free medical services for the local needy had been offered by IBBA since its settlement at here Bodh-Gaya in 1970s.

Now, on every working day more than 200 patients come and take medical treatment with free medicines, and education about importance of the precaution against the ill which is the most essential task for the both patients and medical staff.

We, IBBA, believe that the FREE does not mean only for the benefit of the poor, but also good for the local consumption due to the reduction of the total expenditure for the medical problems, understanding that the early findings and medical treatment brings the early physical and mental recovery.

Another important activity of the IBBA is to organize an annual international Buddhist conference. The gathering, 1997, was just a continuation of the last twenty-one years' academic international conferences and was titled the XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India on the focal theme RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY under Japan-India collaboration as well as we did last year 1996 in the same premises of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda. Through this joint effort of IBBA and Mahavihara we could make a great success of the seminar with excellent contributions and participants.

Especially the year 1997 was of significance since it marked the Golden Jubilee year of India's Independence.

Lastly I would like to mention you all that it is a grteat pleasure for me to put down this short article to explain the main activities of IBBA, especially about the conferences on this XXII proceedings.

In short we believe these three activities, free kindergarten, free clinic, and International Conference of Buddhist studies, are three treasures, TIRATANA, we have in India.

Once again I thank you all concerned with this academic exchange with India.

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THE METHOD AND TREATMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE OF BUD- DHISTIC CANON — SACRED BOOKS

Ven. Kawai Kyoshun

President

International Buddhist

Brotherhood Association, Tokyo

I would like to give a thought on the comparative literature of Buddhist Sacred books and its treatment.

The disciples of Lord Buddha had numerous congregations which were repeated time to time. They used to discuss about the Canons such as Dammapada etc. The Sanskrit and Pali religious Canons were first taken to HAKUBA JI, in 1st century, then Hua Tsang in 461 in China. It was in 7th century that Wieng Sang and Hua Tseng introduced Buddhism into China. The holy books were translated into several languages such as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Japanese. The books were widely read by scholars and monks who spread the Buddhism among their people.

Calendars

As only studying and following the religious Canons would bring vacuum to the research, so the calendars were assumed to be introduced in Buddhist Period, though it was not a common calendar for all. It is assumed that a common calendar was created for all people of the then India, in the period of Emperor Asoka who aimed at bringing India under one umbrella.

Measurement

As it is stated in Vṛhad Samhitā, ancient Northern India was most advanced in Mathematics, specially in cubic method and in high standard measurement, in the whole world. The method was highly connected with the

Buddhistic calendar. The ancient Indian calendar was based on number '6'. In Buddhist calendar '7' has significant meaning. The death of Lord Buddha's Mother occurred on the 7th day of his Birth. Then Lord Buddha walked '7' (seven) steps just after His birth. Then again, '7' is significant as Lord Buddha sat underneath the Mahabodhi Tree for 49 ($7 \times 7 = 49$) days before he became The Buddha.

The details of these episodes are worth studying to accumulate and confirm the dates and years of Buddhist sacred books— their *foundation* and *composition*.

The thread of bindings is broken

The thread of the Canon is broken and the pages of the book are no more in order. It is in topsy turvy condition. This created lots of confusion. The humidity had wet the books and problems arise due to the rotten books. There could be no mistake if the books were paged and numbered before the binding was done. This method for religious books are followed in Thailand.

The problem arises specially when the book is converted into Chinese and Japanese from Sanskrit and there is misinterpretation and mis-tone.

Such problems are being solved in China, as there system of book binding needs no thread. The people of China have adopted the system of folding the book paper pagewise.

Naturally, this bibliology problem accompanies such problem in Japan also. But we shall discuss and explain this afterwards.

Misinterpretation, Mispronunciation — A bibliological study

There are many Mahavamsa sacred books which tell about King Bimbisara and Rajgir. For example : There is an episode about Ajatshatru's *Que de Tat*, His Demand, Dissatisfaction, and about his Parents, in Kammuryofu kyo Canon. In this, there is a sentence by the minister Chandrabhan, who tells to Prince Ajatshatru, that, 'There are cases of parricide as many as 18000 in India, but there is no case of matricide by a prince. If you do such thing as

ever, we, all of us shall quit this palace at once.' But, according to Mr. R. Thapar's *Ancient Indian History*, the numbers of particides increased only after the reign of King Ajatshatru. Before him there was a very few such cases. If Ms. Thapar's statement is right, the problem of mistaken writting must have occurred in India or it must have happened in China at the time of translation into Chinese. There is a word like 'ten angle world' in such book. We find that, in 7 century, 10 unity system was used in Chinese mathematics. It is interesting to know that even in composition and translation of Chinese canons, measurement and number used was based on 10, 6, and 7. (nò. 12).

There are letters like Brāhmī Script, and Sanskrit which was written in Devanagari. These scripts differed from the spoken language of those days. So came the mistakes, errors and headache and anxiety. It also can be seen that how it is difficult to differentiate the phonetic words, which are same in words but differ in meaning and tone. We see that, this same confusing problem arises while reading the line on Ashoka pillar. The pillar at Lumbini has the Aśokan Prakrit language written in Brāhmī. The words are same but accent may be different. It is quite a job to decipher them.

The papers have come from China to Japan. The Japanese scholars borrowed Holy books from their Gurus and copied the matters. On the last page, they wrote the date and the name of the person from whom the book was borrowed. This is called 'Okugaki'. If it was written in Block print and was published, the date of publishing also was written. Of course the books were bound to be old and the thread would break and thus comes the confusion of arranging the pages, as I stated before.

Collection

In editing or copying the book, we have to understand the relativeness of the books. For example, many kinds of children's books have been categorised, in A, B, C, and so on. It has been arranged in horizontal way, errors are corrected and is given for publication in printed form.

This is taught in a branch of bibliological literature. In this seminar last year, I was presented with a set of *Tripaṭaka*. I went through them thoroughly, and found that a part of it was not translated into Chinese letters. The finding gave me lots of pleasure.

I once again, thank our governor, Dr. A.R.Kidwai, and Prof. D. K. Barua, and other learned professors for this kindness shown to me.



SPEECH OF THE CHIEF GUEST

Hon'ble Ms. Kamala Sinha

Minister of State

Ministry of External Affairs

Government of India

1. I am delighted and honoured to be the Chief Guest at the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara's 22nd International Conference on Buddhist Studies which focuses on the relevance of Buddhism and other religions in modern society. My sincere thanks to the Mahavihara and also their collaborators, the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association for having provided me this opportunity to be with you all. I would be remiss in my duties if I did not specially thank Respected Governor Kidwai, who besides being the President of the Board of Management of Mahavihara, is also a dear personal friend.

2. As you all know, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara was established by the Government of Bihar in 1951 for the promotion of advance studies and research in Buddhist philosophy and Pali texts. From the very beginning this institution drew students from practically all the Buddhist nations of the world. It is only natural that a large number of students from the Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Japan have studied here. However, what is even more satisfying is that there have been students also from countries such as Bangladesh, Germany and USA. This itself is a reflection of the high academic standard and the international recognition that this institute has earned for itself.

3. For me personally, it is a matter of great satisfaction as this is one institute, which has put my State on the world map. Bihar has been the land from where Buddhism spread throughout the country and also to a large number of countries in the Asian continent. I am informed that there are seventeen countries in Asia where the percentage of Buddhist population ranges from fifty to ninety percent. This, indeed, is very high. Further, of these

seventeen countries, four even have Buddhism as their state religion. Since time immemorial this cultural commonality has been the basis of strong and vibrant relations between these countries and India.

4. India's relations with the countries of South East Asia and the Far East have traditionally been very close. Our foreign policy is consciously oriented towards our Asian neighbours. In diplomatic parlance it is called the "Look East Policy". We are closely associated with the ASEAN. Japan is one of our major trading and economic partner. Japanese companies are participating in our economic development in a large measure. China is our most important neighbour and relations are improving. Korea has emerged as a steady economic partner. Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are our traditional friends. Recently, we have launched a new initiative involving Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand which is to be joined shortly by Myanmar also. This initiative, called BIST-EC, groups together some of the countries with large Buddhist population. The group, inter alia, needs to focus on our common cultural heritage and how it could be used to enhance people to people level contact.

5. The message of love, compassion and tolerance as preached by Lord Buddha has greater relevance today, than perhaps, in any other period in the history of mankind. We see a world running after material benefits and comforts – a world steeped in consumerism. There is suspicion of our neighbours and aliens. Violence seems to have crept into every aspect of our life. Intolerance has deeply divided the society on the lines of caste, creed, religion, colour and ethnicity. The division between the rich and the poor has become sharper. While some inequality in economic attainment cannot be avoided, it is saddening to note that the rich do not feel duty-bound to assist their less fortunate brethren. Very high levels of consumption in some societies on the one hand, and the daily struggle for even basic necessities by a large segment of the global population on the other, itself has created tensions which are threatening world peace. Consumption levels of the privileged segments of the society has reached, if I may say so, unsustainable

levels. Man is not in harmony with nature. The resulting demonstration effect has created pressures on the poorer societies to emulate these standards which perhaps cannot be achieved without permanently damaging our environment and ecology. Sharing and Caring, which constitute the basic message of all religions, have been forgotten.

6. In addition, the desire to dominate others, even through the use of sheer force, has resulted in an unbridled arms race. Mighty and deadly weapons have been stockpiled. Still the need for such power has not been satiated. Enormous amount of money, time and energy are being spent even now on newer weapons and deadlier means of mass annihilation. This has imperilled the very existence of the mankind. This needs to stop. Sanity must prevail.

7. It is time for us to pause and think about the world that we wish to create for ourselves. More important, about the world we wish to leave behind for the generations to come. I believe that the message of all religions, and particularly that of Buddhism, could guide us in our search for an ideal world. The distortions in the society are only a manifestation of internal discontent of the human being. He needs to learn the virtues of contentment. Many of the present ills would disappear automatically. The message of peace and universal brotherhood of Buddhism needs to be used as a catalyst for ushering in a better world.

8. Mahatma Gandhi, Father of our nation, was deeply inspired by the teachings and tenets of Buddhism. He practised these in his struggle against the British for India's independence. It proved to the world that the moral strength of Satyagraha was more potent a weapon than the armed might of the then mightiest empire. "Satyameva Jayate" was no empty slogan. It was made the basis of an unique experiment in the history of mankind. Independence of India had a dominant effect leading to removal of the yoke of colonialism of a large number of countries in Asia and Africa.

9. As I stated earlier, India is the birth-place of Buddhism. This has also endowed us with a large number of Buddhist monuments and relics. We understand our international responsibilities as trustees of these monuments which are venerated by Buddhists around the world. The Archaeological Society of India has been charged with the responsibility of preserving these monuments in all parts of the country. A large number of projects have been undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India. Some of the major projects are :

(i) A project costing US Dollars half-a-million (US \$ 500,000/-) for the conservation of Buddhist monuments in Sanchi and Satdhara in Madhya Pradesh.

(ii) The Government of Maharashtra along with Department of Tourism, Government of India, is to implement an internationally funded project for development of infrastructure such as airports, roads, electric and water supply etc. This is aimed primarily at promoting Buddhist tourism into India. This project focuses on the monuments of Ajanta and Ellora Caves which, as you know, are also inscribed on the World Heritage list of UNESCO. Assistance is also being provided under the project to Archaeological Survey of India for conserving and developing these monuments.

(iii) The Archaeological Survey of India, under its own programmes of research, has been taking up excavations at selected sites, which also include Buddhist sites, with a view to exploring the missing links in the history and archaeology of the nation. In the recent past, excavations on Buddhist sites at Lalitagiri in Orissa & Vaishali in Bihar have led to important discoveries and sacred relics have been brought to light at Lalitagiri.

(iv) During the current year, a national committee under the Archaeological Survey of India with representation from concerned departments and State Governments has been constituted. This committee has identified several monuments for integrated deveopment. These monuments are;

Ajanta and Ellora Caves in Maharashtra,

Lalitagiri, Udaigiri and Ratnagiri in Orissa,

Nalanda, Vaishali and BodhGaya Museums in Bihar, and

Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh.

The Government of India would like to improve and develop these monuments and provide basic amenities of international standards for tourists. This would ensure that not only scholars visit specialised institutes, but common people also get an opportunity to visit the land of Buddha and see for themselves the sites and monuments connected with their faith. It is deeply satisfying to learn that only recently UNESCO has declared Lumbini to be a World Heritage.

10. India has not only waited for the tourists to arrive and see these relics *in situ*. In fact, as part of our efforts to share our common Buddhist heritage with the world, we have also sent the holy relics of Lord Buddha to various countries. The emotional, at times tearful, reception of these relics in some of the countries is a testimony to the reverence in which these are held. We in India are proud to be the trustees of these relics and monuments.

Thank you.



WELCOME

Dipak Kumar Barua

Director

Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda

Welcome to the XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India on the focal theme **RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY**. This Conference is a continuation of the twenty-one International Buddhist Conferences except that one of 1996, organised solely so far by the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association in the sacred campus of the Indosan Nipponji (Japanese Temple) at Bodh-Gaya. Considering its academic output and the possibility of exploring to set up an institute for higher studies in Pali and Buddhism the organisers have renamed this year the Conference which is expected to play the role of an important catalyst to further facilitate Japan-India collaboration and contribute in deepening the cooperative academic relations between these two countries. Through the joint efforts of the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association and the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara such bilateral relations the future would witness further progress both in width and depth.

This year 1997 is of special significance since it marks the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence. It is a moment for all Indians to be proud of and to be cherished belonging to the largest democracy of the world since the fifty years of independence are full of success stories.

Thus the 50th year of our independence gives us an opportunity to introspect on our successes and failures. One thing seems to be clear that we have the potential to transform the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara into a vibrant institution which can hold its head high in the comity of nations. Let us hope that we have the will and wisdom to apply ourselves to the exciting task of rebuilding the Mahavihara.

Education is the priority of priorities in the Mahavihara. In the most liberalized climate now prevalent, we stand on the threshold of an exciting future – not without its costs, its challenges, and its risks. We must face up to the real world and measure up to these demanding times if we are to make a crucial contribution. This aspiration to do more, to achieve greater good makes us conscious of the necessity of raising our sights, of building for a future. In this temple of learning we are always searching, always questioning, always reaching out, always finding. We are here trying to be truly a world in ourselves – a world that keeps beating in our hearts. Thus in the final analysis, what matters is not where we are but the direction in which we are going. What matters more than our international academic exposure through students and teachers is the spirit of striving that they signify, the spirit of human endeavour.

In less than 900 days we shall reach the year 2000. The coming millenium holds tremendous promise for those pupils and scholars who could manage the transition in a radically changing external environment. Rapid changes in Pali and Buddhistic Studies will be forced by changing scholar behaviours and advancement in information management and technology. An internationally renowned statesman once said : "Change is the Law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." The Nava Nalanda Mahavihara truly believes in this dictum and is constantly looking ahead to face the future challenges with greater determination. I have no hesitation in saying that long term values have been created for all our students and staff-members. My colleagues in the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara join me in pledging total commitment to shaping a bright future for your dearest Mahavihara.

Considering the remote location, rural background, and lack of infrastructural facilities we fervently believe that our distinguished guests, friends, fellow participants and learned scholars who have gathered here from near and far only in the name of serene Nalanda will forgive us for material inconveniences during these two days since the inhabitants of Nalanda in particular and the people of Bihar in general with great spiritual legacy are always prepared to extend a warm welcome to you all.

It is my duty here to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of Rs. 25,000/- from Ven. Ms. Yuan Ming Master, Deputy Secretary General, Beijing Xuan Zang Research Centre, Beijing, China, and one 25 Kv. Diesel Generator as well as about forty-six teakwood bed-frames from the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Bodh-Gaya, during this year for the use of the students and staff of the Mahavihara.

In fine, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our learned Chancellor His Excellency Dr. A.R. Kidwai, Governor of Bihar, who has kindly dedicated to the Nation today our new HOSTEL ŚĪLABHADRA-ĀRĀMA to commemorate the fifty years of India's independence. I am also immensely grateful to Rev. Kyoshun Kawai, President of International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Tokyo, for inaugurating this Conference and Hon'ble Ms. Kamala Sinha, Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, for kindly accepting our invitation to be the Chief Guest of this Inaugural Function.

I am deeply owed to all the learned participants and official representatives from China, Japan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Taiwan, without whose presence the academic discussions could not be materialised. In this connection I would like to convey my deep appreciation for the co-operation and support received from the Government of India, Government of Bihar, Nalanda District Administration, C.P.W.D., and above all the local people. Also I would like to place on record my sincere and deep appreciation for the dedication, devotion and commitment shown at all levels by the students, teachers and employees of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, whose contribution has been invaluable in propelling the Mahavihara gradually towards the greater heights of excellence.

Once again I welcome you all to this grand feast of knowledge.

Nalanda

December 09, 1997



ADDRESS BY THE CHINESE SCHOLAR

Ven. Chuan Yin

Deputy Director

China Buddhist Academy, Beijing

People's Republic of China

I am very happy and feel greatly honoured to attend the XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies being held at Nalanda today as the representative of the Buddhist Association of China and wish to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the organisers who have done a lot for the preparation of the Conference. Here, please allow me, on behalf of all Chinese Buddhists and Dr. Zhou Pachu, President of Buddhist Association of China, to express our warm congratulations on the opening ceremony of the Conference and wish the Conference be a perfect success under the great compassion of Lord Buddha. At the present peace and development are the main trends in modern society and peoples all over the world long for peace and happiness, which are also the certain goal for all Buddhists to strive for. Although there are different religions in the world, the main principles are the same advocating mercy, equality, kindness, peace, etc. So it is very meaningful for us to have assembled here to share views on "The Relevance of Buddhism and other Religions in Modern Society". I firmly believe that the Conference will certainly find new ways to promote mutual respect and trust. Seeking common grounds while reserving differences, peaceful co-existence and friendship among different religions may be ensured with the joint efforts to make new contributions to world peace and happiness of all living beings.

India is a great country of ancient civilization and also the birth-place of Buddhism. Since Buddhism was introduced to China 2000 of the Chinese monks kept on coming to India to learn Buddhism, while Indian monks kept on going to China to preach Buddhism. Among them, the most famous are Faxiang, Yuan-Tsang and Yi-Jing from China and Mongolia. Bodhidharma

from India had made great contributions to develop friendship between the peoples of China and India. What is more worth of mentioning here is the great traveller and translator, Ven. Yuan Tsang. He travelled in India for 13 years and studied Buddhism at Nalanda University in the 7th Century. After he came back to China with a large number of Sūtras, he translated over 1330 volumes of Buddhist Sūtras from Pali and Sanskrit into Chinese. He not only made remarkable contributions to Chinese Buddhism, but also to the cultural exchanges between China and India. On the occasion of 2500 anniversary of Lord Buddha's Mahaparinirvana in 1956, Late Prime Minister Zhou-En-lai of China and Late Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru of India not only shouted together Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai, they initiated the set up of the "Yuan Tsang Memorial Hall" at Nalanda so as to commemorate the great pioneer of the friendly exchange between China and India. Now 40 years have passed. Today I am very happy to see that the Memorial Hall has been perfectly protected by the Indian Government and Bihar State Government. So I would like, on behalf of all Chinese Buddhists, to express our heartfelt thanks for all that have been done by the Indian people for the Memorial Hall and surely hope that we should cooperate with the Department concerned under the Indian Central Government or Bihar State Government to decorate and substantiate the Memorial Hall, the symbol of friendship between China and India, in the near future.

May all friends here enjoy good health and good luck ! May the traditional friendship between the peoples of China and India be ever lasting for ever !

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RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY*

Prof. Dr. G.C. Nayak

Former Vice-Chancellor

Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri

Presently, Senior Fellow, I.C.P.R.

Religion, as a phenomenon, is so very near, so very intimate, to all of us that even when we try to avoid religion, in some form or the other, it tends to cling to us in some other form and even when we deliberately try to cultivate an anti-religious or an irreligious stance, religion does not leave us even for a moment, so to say, because it seems to be here, there, and every where staring us in our face, whether we like it or not, with its all-encompassing embrace.

On the other hand, religion appears to be so very remote, so very far from us, in as much as a sort of intransigent mystery seems to be lying at the very heart of its being since the time immemorial; in its multifarious aspects and multi-dimensional forms, it continues to remain somewhat baffling even for the best of the human intelligence, to say the least. This bafflement has been evident even in our earliest thoughts. The deep sense of mystery expressed in the inimitable literary style of the Rgvedic 'Hymn to Creation' is the earliest example available to us, displaying the characteristically unfathomable nature of creation and the creator which traditionally constitute the subject-matter of religion. "Who truly knows", asks the Vedic sage, "and who can declare it? Whence it was born, and how this world was fashioned? The gods came later than the earth's creation: who knows then out of what the world has issued? Whether he made the world or did not make it, He knows

*Key-note address delivered at the Inaugural Session of XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies at Nava Nalanda Mahavihara on December 09, 1997.

whence this creation came, he only who in the highest-heaven guards and watches: He knows indeed, but then, perhaps, *he* knows not ! "

This is true not only of any specific topic or subject of religion but of religion as a phenomenon on the whole. Naturally and quite understandably, therefore, I shall be proceeding to deal with this topic with utmost humility and caution.

Moreover, there is another problem worth noting here. If one seeks to arrive at a definition of what religion is, it won't be possible for him to find one which should be acceptable to all religious sects and denominations. Perhaps Wittgenstein's famous notion of "family resemblance," or "similarities crisscrossing and overlapping" may be of some help here. For an adequate assessment of the situation one may be required to concentrate on what is popularly understood to be a religious way of life. As Professor H.D. Lewis has aptly observed in his **Philosophy of Religion** :

"It is not difficult to anticipate what the word 'religion' would first call to mind for readers of this book. They would probably associate it, in the first place, with certain kinds of buildings called churches or temples, and the performances called 'acts of' worship that go on there. Closely allied to this is the role of persons specially appointed and instructed to take a leading part in these performances, priests and preachers. These are known to wear special kinds of clothes, sometimes because that is involved in the part they play in acts of worship and sometimes as a general indication of their office and the way it is thought of by themselves and other members of the community. In the first case we have vestments of various kinds and in the second the round collar and the rather sombre cloth of the clergy. These have their well-known equivalents in religions other than the Christian one".

Religion as a phenomenon involving the sense of the sacred, "the idea of the holy", "a way of valuing most comprehensively and intensively", religious valuing as "something involving ultimate concern" are only various examples of sophisticated understanding of the religious way of life.

In the modern society, the pride of place mostly goes to scientific temper and secularism, no doubt, but at the same time it needs to be noted that Religion has not become redundant or irrelevant for that very reason. World-religions like Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism, for example, have not only not lost their relevance and importance in the present-day society, but it is also evident that they are growing from strength to greater strength alongside our scientific temper and secularist outlook. It is remarkable indeed, and there must be some reason for this. These world-religions have a very significant role to play even in the modern society influenced largely by the scientific temper and the secularist spirit.

'Secularism' is a term which has aroused a lot of controversy and confusion among scholars because of its diverse implications and different meanings attached to the term in different contexts. The term 'secular' has been used primarily in a sense opposed to the 'religious', 'other worldly', 'spiritual' and 'sacred'. One need not go into the history of how this term came to be used in the sense of 'anti-religious' or 'irreligious' in the first instance. The latin term 'Saeculum' which means 'the age, the world' may throw some light in this regard. According to Hackman, "secularism signifies the kind of life that is lived in complete indifference to God and to religious values"¹. It has been taken to mean not only some thing "non-spiritual, having no concern with religious or spiritual matters"², but also "a movement, intentionally ethical, negatively religious with political and philosophical antecedents"³. It has also been taken to be "an attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of knowledge purged of supernatural, fideistic presuppositions"⁴. From this point of view certain point of contact between secularism and scientific temper is quite discernible. According to Newbegin, "the true Secularism has been taken to refer to a system of belief or an attitude which in principle denies the existence or the significance of realities other than those, which can be measured by the methods of natural science"⁵. Scientific temper stands for an attitude of mind that does not take into account any thing other than that which is conducive to the search of knowledge. As Russell has aptly remarked, "The

scientific attitude of mind involves a sweeping away of all other desires in the interests of the desires to know"⁶. "The kernel of the scientific outlook", according to him, is "the refusal to regard our own desires, tastes and interests as affording a key to the understanding of the world"⁷.

The question, however, is whether religion can be ignored altogether in favour of the scientific temper or the secularist spirit. Supposing that religious or spiritual matters need to be properly apprehended in the course of our search for knowledge or truth, supposing that they are matters of importance in our search for knowledge of the world as a whole, it may so transpire that by ignoring these matters our genuine search for knowledge would be vitiated or misguided to that extent. At least a religious person would think it to be so. If religion is ignored, or if there is a deliberately anti-religious trend associated with secularism, is it not itself unscientific? Are we doing justice to all aspects of life if in our search for truth or knowledge we ignore one of the most vital aspects, viz. the religious one? As Tillich points out : "religion opens up the depth of man's spiritual life which is usually covered by the dust of our daily life and noise of our secular work. It gives us the experience of the Holy, of some things which is untouchable, awe-inspiring, an ultimate meaning, the source of ultimate courage. This is the glory of what we call religion."⁸. Here one must be very careful. There is a form of secularism in which a secular man, though not himself religious, is expected not to ignore religion altogether. He may be respector of different religions and may try to understand them, try to see different forms of religious life with a detached look. On the other hand, even if he in his own private life subscribes to one of the various religious forms, he may, in so far as he has a secular outlook, develop respect for the other forms and have a detached and impartial outlook towards all religions.

But is not religion necessarily dogmatic and hence not amenable to an open discussion? As Russell points out : "The world needs open hearts and open minds, and it is not through rigid systems, whether old or new, that these can be derived"⁹. But why should religion be identified with dogmas? Can

one not be regarded as religious, even truly religious in certain contexts, although he may not subscribe to any of the specific dogmas ? This is a very important question to which any answer whatsoever may appear to be controversial, for it depends so much on our different perspectives and understanding. But to me it appears that we can conceive of a truly religious way of life devoid of dogmas. Dogma, though not very unfamiliar in religion, is certainly not intrinsic to it.

'Dogma' here is used to signify dogmatism in some form or the other and this is the sense in which 'dogma' is not intrinsic to religion, although it is true that one cannot be called religious without commitments of some sort or the other. It is high time that we may consider replacing the word 'dogma' which carries an evidently pejorative significance (dogma, e.g., as 'arrogant declaration of opinion' in *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary*) with a less problematic term like 'commitment' in the religious circle. "One word is too often profaned for me to profane it", such was the observation of P.B. Shelley, the great English poet, made long back even in connection with the word 'love', an apparently loveable English word. It is no wonder if the word 'dogma' with its pejorative associations of 'dogmatic' should be considered an anathema in Religion where dogmatism cannot be considered to be a virtue in any case.

It is the commitment to that which is supposed to be the highest, the best, the paramārtha, which is the most fundamental aspect of religion, not its dogmatism. Dogmatism leads to bigotry, intolerance and a sort of maniacal conduct on the part of one who is wedded to such dogmas, whereas a particular commitment to that which is the highest or the best may make room for or at least permit a meaningful dialogue with other sincere and serious commitments not only without risking its own cause but also with a positive purpose of promoting its cause in a larger context. Hence I would advocate the cause of religion without dogma only in this sense, not in the sense of religion as devoid of its sincere and fundamental commitments which would certainly be a contradiction in terms. My point is that there is no reason why one cannot

lead a truly religious life devoid of dogmas and why religious questions cannot be discussed with scientific temper.

I will be exploring here the possibility of arriving at a certain consensus regarding the minimum that is common to almost all the world-religions irrespective of any specific dogma which might lead to bigotry and intolerance. Each of the world-religions has its own specific features no doubt, but as religious phenomenon they also possess certain common features which need to be highlighted.

In religion we encounter a unique phenomenon of a total commitment and dedication to that which is considered to be the highest and the best along with a need to uplift the humanity at large in the direction of that highest goal. That is why religion is supposed to fulfil the innermost urge of man. I am of course not referring here to the aberrations of religion which might have played havoc at times in the history of mankind. A truly religious man is guided and inspired by what I would call a "unique concern for the weakling," a concern for all those who are weak in some respect or the other. The entire life of a truly religious man is orientated towards the alleviation of the sufferings of the weak ¹⁰. Different types of weakness may be found in different persons, groups or nations which need eradication at the hands of a truly religious man. Such persons or groups may belong to the rich or poor, the learned or the illiterate and even the powerful or the powerless. The concern of the truly religious man is with the common weaknesses and drawbacks which cause untold suffering to the humanity at large, and this is the sense in which I have designated it as a "concern for the weakling". A king from this point of view may be considered a weakling in a certain context and may benefit immensely from the contact of a truly religious man. The life-history of Asoka may be cited as a case in point. This "concern for the weakling" seems to be a whole-time passion with the religious man. The only thing which needs to be remembered in this connection is that the term "weakling" here does not refer to a specific class of persons, groups or nations. The reference is to the human weakness, wherever and in whatever form it

may be found, even despite appearances to the contrary in certain contexts. One may, to all outward purpose, appear to be quite strong otherwise, but at the same time he or she may very miserably be lacking only in strength of character, a person about whom **The Bible** would say, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Physically, mentally as well as spiritually weak and distressed persons, groups or societies receive the primary attention of the religious man because of his genuine love for them for whose alleviation of suffering his message of what he considers to be the best, the *paramārtha*, is meant. This may be regarded as a sort of therapeutic conception of Religion¹¹. This is the sense in which God has been regarded as **Dinabandhu** (a friend of the weak) in Hinduism and Guru Nanak has declared that he is a friend of the lowliest (**Nīca anadari nīca jāti nicihu ati nīcu, Nānaku tin kai saṅga sāthi badiā siu kyā ris**). Buddha's *Mahākaruṇā* also points in the same direction. Jesus, the son of God, of the **Bible** is well-known to have a definite soft corner for the "weakling" and Prophet Moham̄med's concern for the poor and the weak is no less conspicuous. Vivekananda, one of the great modern exponents of Hinduism, is known to have given a call to treat the poor and the illiterates as the objects of veneration (**Daridra devo bhava, mūrkhā devo bhava**)¹². This is a regular feature, I should think, of the world-religions which needs to be highlighted. The concern for the weak in the religious man seems to find its inspiration from his realisation that he has encountered or apprehended the highest and the best in his life and that this unique experience needs to be shared with others who are less fortunate. It is significant that these features are found both in Godless religions and religions having faith in different types of Divinity or Godhead in the context of the world-religions. The problem of dealing with the weakling with a genuine concern for his or her welfare has always been there no doubt, but it has been much more urgent in the modern society because of highly subtle and sophisticated ways and means by which exploitation of one by another works in the present day society, and the task of truly religious person has, therefore, become much more relevant, much more urgent, in the modern society.

A typically dedicated life with its own belief-systems and commitment to the best, the *paramārtha*, alongwith a unique concern for the weak can be regarded as truly religious, according to me, irrespective of any particular type of belief, dogma, and worship which may or may not form an integral part of such a life. Lives of great religious saints, irrespective of the place or time to which they may belong, can be cited as examples in this regard. But could it not be construed as a mere stipulation, persuasion or even a sort of imposition from my side and for that matter from the side of any of those who would subscribe to this view ? Well, I do admit that it could be construed as a stipulation or persuasion, but it is not necessary that it should be so. What I would like to submit for consideration is that there is a definite use in the sense mentioned above of the word "religious" or "religion" which is available to us and it would therefore not be wrong if this idea is highlighted in religion irrespective of the exact nature for its external wrappings or its specific dogmas.

"The plain fact", as William James has pointed out with a rare insight into the subject, "is that men's minds are built, as has been often said, in water-tight compartments. Religious after a fashion, they yet have many other things in them beside their religions, and unholy entanglements and associations inevitably obtain. The baseness so commonly charged to religion's account are thus, almost all of them, not chargeable at all to religion proper, but rather to religion's wicked practical partner, the spirit of corporate dominion. And the bigotries are most of them in their turn chargeable to religion's wicked intellectual partner, the spirit of dogmatic dominion, the passion for laying down the law in the form of an absolutely closed in theoretic system. The ecclesiastical spirit in general is the sum of these two spirits of dominion".¹³ Though there is no doubt some truth in what William James has said, it is, however, only a partial truth. Instead of putting the entire blame at the door of the ecclesiastical spirit, one should take note of certain intrinsic features of religion proper and a possible infiltration of bigotry in and through those very features. It seems to be a significant feature about religion that there cannot be a religion without a total commitment or devotion to that which it considers

to be the highest and the best. It is, therefore, nothing strange or extra-ordinary that a religious person or an institution should have his own total commitments. One such commitment or devotion may have its origin in some such Gospel as that of Mark : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength", and another may get its inspiration from the teachings of Srī Kṛṣṇa in the **Bhagavadgītā** to take resort to Him, forsaking all considerations of **dharma** (**sarva dharmān parityajya māmekaṃ śaraṇaṃ braja**). Even one may be said to be committed to tolerance, to the point of view that all the different paths of different religions lead to the same goal, or on the other hand one may be committed exclusively to one particular path. One may, while avoiding commitment to all dogmatic theories as Nāgārjuna does, be viewed as being wedded to such a non-commitment. In this sense the life of a truly religious man is a typically dedicated life; there is not only concern here, there is an ultimate concern without which it cannot be regarded as religious. This ultimate concern, total commitment or a typical dedication to its cause can easily make room for and be confused with bigotry, although bigotry is not the same as dedication or commitment. It is of seminal importance therefore that this subtle distinction should not only be made in our day-to-day religious practice, but it should also be highlighted. From the ultimate concern of the religious man it does not follow that he must be a bigot and promote bigotry, and further it does not follow from the commitment that the religious man or institution cannot allow an open discussion on the subject. Can't we agree to differ afterall ? The point is that within the framework of different religious commitments there can be mutual understanding and harmony; irrationality and pig-headedness are not the necessary concomitants or outcome of different commitments. An open-minded approach need not be and ought not to be sacrificed at the altar of bigotry and irrationality in the name of commitment. There can be discussion with "open hearts and open minds" in interreligious circles also, provided the distinction between religious commitment and religious bigotry is clearly brought out. What I mean to say is that religions

along with the different commitments can be discussed with a scientific temper, provided we are prepared to face the commitments of different religions with tolerance and mutual respect for each other.

For my part, I consider it to be inbuilt in the very structure of the world-religions that they may not only come to a clash with each other, as they have done from time to time on account of the clinging to dogmas of different sorts, but they can also try to understand with sincerely each other's commitments in the interest of human welfare which has been the genuine concern at least of the masters themselves like Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Nanak and Sri Krishna, to name only a few leaders, who are responsible for giving flesh and blood to these religions.

In this connection Buddha has set an ideal before us in propagating a religion that is committed to freedom from dogmas through analysis and thus being conducive to the welfare of the humanity at large (bahujana sukhāya, bahujana hitāya)¹⁴. I place it before the learned audience only as an example of a religious phenomenon par excellence along with its development in the direction of Mādhyamika Śūnyavāda.

There is hardly any parallel in the history of mankind to Buddha's avoidance of dogmas through analysis as evidenced in Sutta 63 of the Majjhima-Nikāya and his persistent refusal to be swayed away any dogmatic view whatsoever, e.g. in the Suttā-Nipāta:

"From lusts and dogmas free, quit too of theories, he (unheeding sage) goes his stainless way, devoid of self-reproach" says the Lord.

A unique insight that steers clear between the extremes of rival theories by the help of analysis was in ample evidence in the method adopted by Buddha in his teachings. And it seems to have reached its culmination in Nāgārjuna whose Mūla Madhyama-Kārikā along with its commentary Prasannapadā by Candrakīrti are landmarks in this direction. In order to comprehend the immense significance of this insight the notion of prajñāpāramitā as the culmination of such a unique insight needs elucidation.

For a correct assessment of the exact implication of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, however, an understanding of the concept of *pratītyasamutpāda* is a necessary prerequisite. All this is expected to be taken up for detailed discussion by the learned scholars during this Seminar.

A unique conceptual revolution is launched by the Mādhyamīkas in the philosophical firmament by a revealing, and consequently a novel, insight into the nature of *pratītyasamutpāda* which is one of the most fundamental, rather the key, concept of Buddhism. It is identified with *sūnyatā* which in its turn is identified with *niḥsvabhāvatā* and also with the *madhyamāpratipad*, thus making the entire Buddhist thought appear as one systematic and harmonious whole with a central message of its own, which, to be precise enough, is not a message but a paradigm of wisdom. It does not imply the temporal sequence of entities between which there is a causal relation; it points to the dependence of concepts upon one another. This mutual interdependence of concepts is, according to Nāgārjuna, the same as *sūnyatā* which is nothing but *niḥsvabhāvatā*, that is essencelessness of the concepts. If every concept is dependent on another for its intelligibility, how can it be said to have a fixed essence of its own? One who understands *pratītyasamutpāda*, that is mutual dependence or *parasparāpekṣā* of concepts, therefore, understands that they are all *sūnya* or *niḥsvabhāva*, i.e. they do not have an independent and permanent essence of their own. This is what Buddha means by *madhyamāpratipad* also according to Nāgārjuna, in as much as the realisation of the *sūnyatā* or *niḥsvabhāvatā* or essencelessness of concepts steers clear between extremes of speculative metaphysical positions regarding the *svabhāva* or the fixed nature of things and thus makes one adopt a middle course amongst the contending metaphysical theories.

Freedom from contending metaphysical theories is one of the essential features of philosophical insight (*prajñā*) according to Nāgārjuna who is only following Buddha's teaching to its logical conclusion. The insight in question becomes possible, however, through a realisation that there is no essence to hang upon or to cling to in our ordinary discourse which is merely conventionally useful. Once this dawns upon the wise man, he desists from

committing those errors which an essentialist or *svabhāvavādi* is likely to commit. *Prajñā* consists in the insight that makes us free from the bondage of essentialist picture-thinking (*sarvakalpanākṣayarūpa*), and *Nirvāṇa* is nondifferent from this critical insight 'par excellence' which is free from essentialist picture-thinking.

Śūnyatā stands for a denial of all metaphysical constructions and it is therefore strange that this in its turn be misrepresented as either a metaphysical decline of 'Void' or of the 'Absolute'. Buddhist thought is out-and-out anti-metaphysical and anti-speculative in its character and whosoever converts *Śūnyatā* itself in to a metaphysical doctrine of nihilism or Absolutism or any thing of the sort is declared by Buddha to be incurable, says Nāgārjuna in one of his *Kārikās*¹⁵ : *Śūnyatā sarva drṣṭinām proktā niḥsaraṇam Jinaiḥ, Yeṣāṃ tu Śūnyatā drṣṭistānasādhyaṇ vabhāṣine*". Chandrakīrti, while commenting on this *Kārikā*, refers to Buddha's instructions to Kāśyapa as follows : "O Kāśyapa, it would be better to entertain the substance-view (*Pudgala drṣṭi*) of the magnitude of mount Sumeru than to hug the *Śūnyatā* view of the nihilist (*abhavābhiniवेशināḥ*); I call him incurable who clings to *Śūnyatā* itself as a theory. If a drug administered to a patient were to remove all his disorders but were to foul the stomach itself by remaining in it, would you call the patient cured ? Even so, *Śūnyatā* is an antidote to all dogmatic views, but if a man were to cling to it for ever as a view itself, he is doomed'. Nagarjuna's critical insight consists in a consistent denial of all 'isms' and this is what is known as *Prajñāpāramitā* or wisdom par excellence in *Mahāyāna* literature. A rare insight which consistently tried to avoid all sorts of dogmatic speculations by pointing out the 'nirvāṇa' consists in total annihilation of all *kalpanās* or thought-constructions and speaks of *Tathāgata* as one who is never engaged in thought-constructions, is reduced to the sad plight of becoming a victim of one or another *kalpanā* or thought-construction and the whole insight is thus lost in complete oblivion. As in the case of the nihilistic interpretation so also in the case of an absolutist or a transcendentalist approach to *Śūnyatā*, it is well to remind oneself of the following warning of Nāgārjuna which has been

conveniently overlooked and even forgotten : 'Vinaśayati durdṛṣṭā sūnyatā mandamedhasaṃ, sarpo yathā durgrhito vidyā vā duṣprasādhitā' ¹⁶. Just as a snake caught in the wrong manner by a dull-witted person only causes death to him or as a magic wrongly employed destroys the magician, so also Śūnyatā wrongly seen and understood only ruins the person concerned. Those who are obsessed with the idea of a positive entity or an absolute reality on the ground or basis of which everything is declared to be Śūnya are according to Candrakīrti like those persons who, when told that they will get nothing, expect that 'nothing' will actually be given to them. (Yo na kincidapi paṇyaṃ dāsyāmītyuktaḥ sa ced dehibhostadeva mahyaṃ na kiñcinnāma paṇyamiti brūyāt sa kenopāyena śakyaḥ paṇyābhāvaṃ grāhayitum" ¹⁷. The *tattva* or the *paramārtha* here, the ultimate, the highest and the best is said to be "aparapratyanaṃ śāntaṃ prapancairaprapancitaṃ". All these description, however, do not apply to any absolute transcending thought nor do they refer to Śūnyatā in the sense of the void of nihilism; they are only the descriptions of the state of affair when one realises sūnyatā in the sense of *niḥsvabhāvatā* or essencelessness of everything, of all our ideas or concepts, although they have their conventional or practical utility of course. As Nāgārjuna points out : "Dve satye samupāśritya Buddhānāṃ Dharma deśanā, Lokasaṃvṛti satyaṃ ca satyaṃ ca paramārthataḥ. Yēnayorna vijānanti Vibhāgaṃ Satyayordvayoḥ, Te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gaṃbhīraṃ Buddha śāsane" ¹⁸, this is the great Buddhist insight. At the end of his Kārikā, Nāgārjuna bows down to Gautama for giving this rare insight that eliminates all dogmas and dogmatic thought-constructions through his teaching imparted out of anukarṇpā or Mahākaruṇā ¹⁹.

The insight has a far-reaching implication in the present day society which, with all its so-called modern technology and scientific progress, with all its professed secularism and scientific temper, is fraught with conflicts, dissensions and an overdose of violence. Śūnyatā as a form of life, understood and practised in the right perspective both in the national and international level, can be conducive to the cessation of dogmatic clinging to the essentialist

thought-construction which is at the root of the most of our man-made problems. And what is more, the *sūnyatā*-realisation culminates in *māhakarūṇā*; as *Prajñākaramati* point out : "*Yathābhūta-darśino Bodhisattvasya satteṣu mahākarūṇā pravartate*"²⁰. There is a positive emphasis in this Bodhisattva tradition on the alleviation of the suffering of others since *karūṇā* is the deciding factor here²¹

If this has been put to practice at all as a tradition or ever as an innovative experiment in any part of this little world of ours, one has to admit that it has not always been done in right earnest nor has it been the essential feature of the form of life of the majority or even of a large number of people. The world, it seems, has not yet been genuinely ready for this. As Sri Aurobindo has aptly pointed out in another context : "Teachers of the law of love and oneness there must be, for by that way must come the ultimate salvation. But not till the Time-spirit in man is ready, can the inner and the ultimate prevail over the outer and immediate reality. Christ and Buddha have come and gone, but it is Rudra who still holds the world in the hollow of his hand"²². Sincere effort in the positive direction, however, has to go on; the perspective of minority, even if it may have been so thought in the human history so far, may come to prevail in the long run some day as the right perspective after all, genuine as well as vigorous training-centres for this are the need of the hour.

Buddhism with its diverse schools of thought is in exhaustibly vast multidimensional in scope, and so also are other world-religions in their own ways. One cannot solely deal with even a selected portion of the subject-matter at hand within the short compass of the key-note address. These are only some of the ways, however, in which Buddhism and other religions could be relevant for the modern society, and the direction could be given here at best in an outline only, in order to avoid prolixity. The learned participants who are renowned scholars in their respective fields are expected to provide further, and of course better, illumination in the different sessions of the Seminar.

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1. G.G. Hackman, **Religion in Modern Life** (Charles W. Kegley and Viljo Nikander, 1957) P. 283.
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4. **Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences** (1048) Vol. XIII, P. 631.
5. Leslie Newbegin, **Honest Religion for Secular man** (Lucknow Publishing House, 1966) p. 8.
6. B. Russell, **Mysticism and Logic** (George Allen & Uniwin Ltd., 1963), P. 38.
7. **Ibid.**, P. 37.
8. Paul Tillich, **Theology of Culture** (New York, 1959) p.9.
9. B. Russell, **Why I am not a Christian** (Simon and Schuster, 1957) Preface.
10. Cf "Na tvāhaṃ kāmaya rajyaṃ na svargaṃ nāpunarbhavaṃ, Kāmaya duḥkhataptānāṃ prāṇināmartināśanaṃ", where the prayer is not for kingdom or heaven or even for emancipation from rebirth, but only for the eradication of the suffering of the distressed. Cf. also Bhīma Bhoi, the great saint-poet of Orissa, "Prāṇinka ārata duḥkha apramita dekhu dekhu kevaṃ sahu, Mo jīvana pachhe narke paḍithāu jagata uddhāra heu". "Let me suffer the torture of hell myself but let the whole world of living creatures be liberated from suffering that is simply unbearable"-words that are reminiscent of the Bodhisattva ideal of the Mahāyāna Buddhism.
11. It is significant that the **Lalita Vistara** speaks of the Buddha as the king of physicians (Vaidyarāt). Cf. "Cīrāture jīvaloke kleśa-vyādhi-prapīḍite, Vaidyarāt tvaṃ samutpannaḥ sarva-vyādhi-pramocakaḥ".

12. Cf. B. Ranade (compiler), **Swami Vivekananda's Rousing Call to Hindu Nation** (Centenary Publication, Calcutta, 1963) p. 93. As against the Darwinian theory of the 'Survival of the fittest', the instruction given by Thakur Anukul Chandra, another spiritual leader of the modern times, to his privileged disciples is interesting and worthy of note. Cf. Ray Hauserman, **Ocean in a Tea cup** (Satsang Church, Calcutta-New York, Second Edition, 1977), P.327, "Make the unfit fit. Then we will all survive. Each man is a living universe. You cannot win worlds by losing so much".
13. W. James, **The Varieties of Religious Experience**, (The Modern Library, New York, 1929) pp. 330-331.
14. Cf. **Vinaya Pitaka**, 1.23, "Caratha, Bhikkhave, Cārikam bahujanahitāya, bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya; atthāya, hitāya, Sukhadevamanussānam".
15. **Mūlamadhyama-kārikā**, 13.8.
16. **Ibid.**, 24.11.
17. **Prasannapadā**.
18. **Mūlamadhyama-kārikā**, 24.8 and 9.
19. Cf **Ibid.**, 27.30, "Sarva dṛṣṭiprahāṇāya yaḥ saddharma madesayat, Anukarṇpāmupādāya taṃ namasyāmi Gautamaṃ". Cf. **Majjhima Nikāya** Atthi pana bho to Gotamassa kiñci diṭṭhigataṃ ti ? Diṭṭhigataṃ ti kho Vatsa apanītaṃ Tathāgatassa.
20. **Prājñākaramati, Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā**, 9.1.
21. **Ibid.** 8.103, "Karūṇāparatantratayā paraduḥkhaduḥkhiṇaḥ sarvaduḥkhāpaharaṇāya yatnaḥ". Cf. Karūṇā as one of the noble virtues to be practised under Brahma-Vihāra.
22. **Sri Aurobindo, Essays on the Gita** (New York, 1950), p. 343.



REPORT ON THE XXII INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUDDHIST STUDIES IN INDIA 1997

The XXII International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India on the focal theme **Relevance of Buddhism and other Religions in Modern Society**, was held on December 09 and 10, 1997 at the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, in collaboration with the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Bodh-Gaya. It was just a continuation of the XXI International Conference on Buddhism and Humanism organised jointly at Nalanda by the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara and the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Bodh-Gaya, in December, 1996.

In the beautifully decorated auditorium the Inaugural Ceremony of the XXII International Conference Buddhist Studies in India began with prayers by the Japanese monks and also by the monk-students of the Mahavihara. For world peace. Thereafter Professor Dr. Dipak Kumar Barua Director of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara welcoming the distinguished guests and delegates and participants, highlighted the activities of the Mahavihara and said : The XXI International Conference organised at Nalanda last year sent a welcome signal to scholars of Buddhism of the country and abroad that the Mahavihara had been put on the right path of progress. The credit was also due to co-operation with the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association of Japan. In the year 50th Year of India's Independence, the XXII International Conference, renamed as International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India, seemed to have assured the International Buddhist community that efforts were bearing fruits.

Ven. Kyoshun Kawai, President, International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Tokyo, in his Inaugural Speech dwelt upon the difficulties of reading Buddhist texts available in different languages - Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese and Tibetan.

Thereafter the Chief Guest Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Ms. Kamala Sinha read a short but thought-provoking paper on the

importance of Buddhist Studies. She said that the Mahavihara has put the State of Bihar on the world map. Seventeen countries of Asia have Buddhist population ranging from fifty to ninety percent and four countries have it as their State Religion. Our country dug the birthplace of Buddhism and the custodian of hundreds of Buddhist monuments spread over all parts of the country, has special relation with the Buddhist countries of Asia.

The Key-note address was delivered by Prof. Gauranga Charan Nayak, Former Vice-Chancellor of Sri Jaggannath Sanskrit University, Puri. He observed that "religion, as a phenomenon, is so very near, so very intimate, to all of us that even when we try to avoid religion, ... it tends to cling to us in other form - ... does not leave us even for a moment". The teachings of Buddha, he remarked, were based on rationality. He appreciated that the philosophy of Śūnyatā of Nagarjuna did not ask one to take any position as ultimate truth. Every statement was relative. Even to understand supermundane in relation to mundane or relative was wrong. Professor Nayak further remarked that religion demanded commitment and not dogmatism.

Next the guest from China, Ven. Chuan Yin whose speech was interpreted by his colleague Dr. Zhang Kaiquin, felt greatly honoured to attend the Conference as representative of the Buddhist Association of China. He told the august gathering that in recent time religions contributed much towards bringing the religious communities of the world together in pursuit of world peace. The religious organisations of China have also been able to achieve much in this direction. In course of his speech he reminded of Chinese travellers, Fa-Xian, Zuan-Zang, and Ye-jing, and also of Indian monks to China who gave diversity and firmness to the relations between India and China. He also expressed satisfaction over the maintenance of the Xuan-Zang Memorial Hall at Nalanda and wished to cooperate for its development.

The guests from Bhutan Ven. G.K. Lhundup and his colleague Dr. Yonben Dorjee read out the messages on behalf of the Government of Bhutan. Rev. Bokwao of Thailand informed that 96 per cent of the population in his country are Buddhists who endear India in general as the land of Buddha, and Nalanda in particular as the seat great Buddhist Centre of learning.

Sri Nirupam Chakma, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Government of Mizoram, observed that Buddhists had no privilege to study Buddhism in many parts of the country. Teachings of Buddha should also be taught to small children in class-rooms so that they might inculcate the basic human values. He insisted that literature for this purpose should be prepared and made available.

In his Presidential address delivered by His Excellency Dr. A.R. Kidwai, Governor of Bihar and the Chancellor of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, emphasised the importance of the Conference on the relevance of Buddhism and other religions in the present world of discord and disharmony. Reminding the glorious past of Nalanda and the association of the First President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and the First Vice-President of India Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan with the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, he observed that Nava Nalanda Mahavihara had a great task of rebuilding the Institution ahead and efforts we being made in this direction. He said that the appointment of some eminent scholars as Emiritus Professors had already been made to reactivate the academic and research activities of the Mahavihara. He also informed that he had a plan to search out scholars of wide reputation to bring them at Nalanda and advised to encourage students, Indian and foreign, to come to the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara for research and studies in Pali and Buddhism.

On behalf of Directorate of Tourism, Government of Bihar, through Sri S.K. Singh, the Director of Tourism, Government of Bihar, His Excellency presented the statues of seated Buddha to the following Venerables from different countries :

Rev. Kyoshun Kawai, the President of the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Tokyo.

Rev. Chuan Yin, Vice-Chairman of the Buddhist Association of China, Beizing.

Ven. G. Karma Lhundup, Representative of the Government of Bhutan.

Ven. Bokwao of Thailand, Incharge, Wat Thai, Nalanda.

Ven. Panyalinkara of Bangladesh, Incharge, Chinese Buddhist Temple, Nalanda.

The inaugural ceremony came to a close with the thanks-giving. Ven. Ken-etsu Abiko, Director For Cultural Affairs, International Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Tokyo, who proposed the vote of thanks and expressed gratitude to His Excellency Dr. A.R. Kidwai, the Governor of Bihar, for kindly allowing to arrange the Conference in collaboration with the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara and to the media persons, and district administration, guests, delegates and hoped this cooperation between the International Buddhist Brotherhood Association and the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara will expand further dimensions of Buddhist learning.

In the Inaugural Session two books entitled **Nava Nalanda Mahavihara : At a Glance** and **Nava Nalanda Mahavihara : A Sketch** (1997 ed.) were released by Hon'ble Ms. Kamala Sinha, State Minister of External Affairs, Government of India. Another book on **Buddhism and Humanism : Proceedings of the XXI International Buddhist Conference 1996** edited by Ven. Abiko Ken-etsu and Professor Dipak Kumar Barua was also published on this occasion. Hon'ble Sri Abdool Malick, Minister of Public Relations and Information, Government of Bihar, was also present at this Inaugural Session.

Inauguration of the Hostel Śīlabhadra-Ārāma

At the close of the Inauguration ceremony, His Excellency Dr. A.R. Kidwai and distinguished guests and delegates moved to the newly constructed Hostel Śīlabhadra-Ārāma, named after Ācārya Śīlabhadra, a great teacher of the most celebrated Chinese Traveller Xuan-Zang in the ancient Nālandā Mahāvihāra at Nalanda. His Excellency Dr. A.R. Kidwai, the Governor of Bihar and Chancellor of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, inaugurated the Ārāma and presented it to the Nation commemorating the 50 Years of India's Independence.

Joint Session, December 09, 1997

The Joint Session of the Conference commenced on December 09, 1997 at 2 p.m. after the lunch in the same auditorium. It was chaired by Professor Dr. B.R. Subramanyam of the Nagarjuna University, Andhra, Pradesh. Speaking Dr. Mahesh Tiwari, former Professor of the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi, elaborated the salient features of Buddha's teachings and their relevance today. Next to him Dr. N.H. Samtani, former Head of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. He threw some light on the relevance of Buddhism in the present world. Though by profession Dr. R. Ishri Arshad is a medical practitioner and a social activist, he was deeply engrossed in tracing relevance of Buddhism and Sufism in Modern Society.

Ven. Dhammaviriyo Mahathera, former member of the National Commission for Minorities, Government of India, reminded the teachings of 84 Siddhas of whom one was Sarhapada who was a teacher of the ancient Nalanda Mahāvihāra. The last speaker of this Session was Ven. Rastrapala Mahathera, President, International Meditation Centre, Bodh-Gaya, who dwelt upon the universal brotherhood as practised in Buddhism.

At the end the Chairperson Prof. B.R. Subramanyam expressed his gratitude for inviting him to chair the Session. Sri C.S. Prasad of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara thanked the Chairperson and delegates for their presence and kind cooperation.

Cultural Programmes

In the evening on December 09, 1997 after the academic session cultural programmes were arranged by the Bharatiya Nritya Kala Mandir, Patna, in the auditorium of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara Nalanda, for the guests and participants of the Conference under the guidance of its Director Sri Hari Uppal, himself a renowned artist of performing arts. The teachers and students of the Bhartiya Nritya Kala Mandir presented the classical dance forms of Bharatnatyam, Kathak and Odissi. After the function the delegates and participants were escorted to Rajgir for night stay.

Academic Sessions on December 10, 1997

On December 10, 1997 the academic sessions began at 09.00 a.m. Simultaneously there were three Sessions and each Session having three panels on **Philosophy, Religion and Literature** although, the names of panels does not strictly reflect the subjectwise division of papers. The Sessions were arranged in the newly inaugurated Hostel Silabhadra Arama. In each panel there was one Chairperson and five to six speakers and the time allotted for a Session was one and half hours. Thus in all 54 scholars had an opportunity to present their papers in the Sessions.

Each scholar had his own assesment of the topic discussed and the paper was informative, e.g.

Professor S.K. Pathak of Visvabharati University Santiniketan	Pluralily in Buddhism in our Century
Dr. Natmal Tatia of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara	The Concept of Ignorance and Suffering in Buddhist Philosophy
Professor B.R. Subramanyam of Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh	The Buddhist Heritage : A Futuristic Thought
Sri C.S. Prasad of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda	Religion : A Regulative Factor in Life
Professor Sanghasen Singh of the University of Delhi	Indian Buddhism : Search for Identity
Sri P. Govind Reddy of Andhra Pradesh	Spiritual Buddhism in the Present Day World.
Sri J.K. Sharma	Buddhism and Its Relevance The cultural identity of the Himālayan Bhoṭi Buddhists

Professor Dr. Pulin Barua of the West Bengal University of Burdwan	Role of Early Monastic University Libraries in Buddhist System of Education and Modern Society
Ms. Saswati Mutsuddi of the University of Calcutta	Siṅgālovāda Sutta : The Relevant Document of Human Religion
Dr. Sukomal Barua of the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh	Buddhism Introduced to Bangladesh and its Influence on Modern Society
Professor Bijayananda Kar of Utkal University, Bhubaneswar	The Buddhist View of Karma.
Dr. Vijay Kumar Sharma of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda	Relevance of Buddhism on 50th Anniversary of India's Independence.
Dr. Bhuvaneshwar Chakrabarti of the University of Calcutta	Some Aspects of Buddhism and Hinduism : A Comparative Study
Professor G.C. Nayak of Orissa	The Significance of Madhyamika Approach
Professor Rajendra Ram of Patna University	Relevance of the Suttanipāta to Modern Times For Social and Religious Resurrection
Dr. Piyush Kanti Mahapatra of the University of Calcutta	The Impact of Buddhism on Early Bengali Literature
Dr. Narendra Kumar Dash of the Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan	Buddhist Concept of Brahmavihāra and its Relevance in Modern Society
Dr. S.B. Singh of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda	Relevance of Buddhism in Modern Society
Dr. Ms. Bela Bhattacharya of the University of Calcutta	Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path in the Perspective of Modern Society

**Professor Ms. Susheela Mool
Jadhav of Maharashtra**

**Relevance of Buddhism and other
Religions in Modern Society with
Special Reference to Women**

**Dr. Dipankar Barua of the Univer-
sity of Chittagong, Bangladesh**

**Practice of Universal Love in Practical
Life**

Professor Lalit Shyam

**Relevance of Buddhism's Immortal
Message in Modern Society**

**Ms. Tapati Barua of the
University of Calcutta**

In Quest of Humanity

**Sri Samir Barua of the
University of Calcutta**

**Significance of Brahmavihāra in
Modern Society**

All the Sessions ended at 4 p.m. and the delegates and participants were taken to the pandal for light refreshment and Valedictory Session. Prof. G.C. Nayak was the Chairperson and Prof. R.S. Sharma, especially invited for the occasion, was the main speaker. In his speech Professor Sharma observed that a religion was a product of particular time and place. Unless one could understand the situation then prevailing, one could not appreciate its teachings. Restraining from stealing was meaningful only in the context of individuals having private properties. The ideal of monastic life was itself a reaction against the life of luxury and was an attempt to go back to simple egalitarian life. Seeing in this context Buddhism appeared to be a product of the age when iron came to be used for clearance and cultivation and urbanization was fast expanding and consequent gap between have - s and have not - s was widening gradually. Today the same situation is prevailing. Thus the teachings of Buddha are as relevant as they were in the time of the Propounder.

Speaking on behalf of the delegates Prof. B.R. Subramanyam expressed deep satisfaction over the successful conclusion of the Conference and fruitful discussions and deliberations in both the days.

Rev. Dharmaviriyo Mahathera remarked that the discussions were "no doubt wonderful" and added that the love for Buddhist learning and for Nalanda had encouraged the delegates to gather here from all parts of the country and abroad.

The Chinese delegates Ven. Chuan Yin and Dr. Zhang Kaiqin extended heartfelt thanks to the organisers for inviting them to this Conference. They were happy to acknowledge that they made new friends and learned a lot. They informed that the proceedings of the Conference would be translated into Chinese and distributed among scholars and other interested persons in China.

The Bhutanese delegate, Ven. G.K.Lhondup, was also happy over the successful conclusion of the Conference and hoped to avail himself of such an opportunity again and again. "Respect for Nalanda have brought me here", remarked Professor Dr. Rebatapriya Barua of Bangladesh, who suggested that Nalanda should be developed on the model of the ancient centre of Buddhist learning. He thanked the organisers for arranging the Conference so well.

On behalf of the Japanese delegates Rev. Ken-etsu Abiko expressed deep gratitude for cooperating in organising the Conference and felt satisfaction over the ample time given to fruitful discourses on world peace.

Professor G.C. Nayak remarked that discussions and deliberations were fruitful. He thanked the Director and his staff who worked hard for making the Conference a success.

At the close of the Valedictory Session Professor Dr. D.K. Barua, Director of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, thanked the Chairperson and the participants for their presence and co-operation during the Conference. He extended welcome to Nalanda to each and every participants and fervently believed that they would sincerely contribute to rebuild this grand Mahavihara. He also took note of Professor Rebatapriya Barua's remark of developing Nalanda on the model of ancient centre of Buddhist learning. He passed on the appreciations for the success of the Conference to the devoted staff-members of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara and International Buddhist Brotherhood Association.

The Conference concluded with Cultural Programmes arranged by the artists of the Public Relations Department, Government of Bihar, Patna. Various items of dance and songs of different parts of Bihar presented by the artists offered the participants a glance on the multi-coloured rich cultural heritage of this State. Sri R.C. Sinha, Registrar, thanked the artists for their performances in honour of the delegates.

A few book-stalls including one of the Mahavihara and another of the World Press Pvt. Ltd. for exhibition and sale of the publications and a stall depicting the cultural legacy Buddhism in Bihar of the Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar, were erected in the campus just beside the auditorium temporarily prepared.

GENERAL SESSION December 09, 1997

Chairperson : Professor B. R. Subramanyam **02.00-4.30 p.m.**

- Speakers**
1. Professor Mahesh Tiwari
 2. Professor N.H. Samtani
 3. Dr. R. Ishri Arshad
 4. Ven. Dhammaviriyo Mahathera
 5. Ven. Rastrapal Mahathera

SESSIONS December 10, 1997

FIRST SESSION 09.00-10.30 a.m.

Panel on Philosophy

Chairperson : Professor K.K. Mittal

- Speaker :**
1. Dr. Nathmal Tatia
 2. Dr. B.R. Subramanyam
 3. Dr. P. Govinda Reddy
 4. Sri. C.S. Prasad
 5. Dr. C. Upendra Rao

Panel on Religion

Chairperson : Professor J.K. Sharma

Speakers : 1. Dr. Lalit Shyam

Panel on Literature

Chairperson : Dr. A. R. Chaudhary

Speakers

1. Dr. Ms. Sudha Verma
2. Dr. Ms. Saswati Mutsuddi
3. Dr. B. Lokhande
4. Dr. V. K. Sharma
5. Dr. Rajendra Ram
6. Dr. Devendra Prasad
7. Dr. P.K. Singh Maun
8. Dr. Kiran Sahay

THIRD SESSION

01.30-03-30 p.m.

Panel on Philosophy

Chairperson : Dr. N.H. Samtani

Speakers :

1. Dr. B. Labh
2. Dr. Bimalendra Kumar
3. Dr. P. Mishra
4. Dr. N.K. Das
5. Dr. J.N. Das

Panel on Religion

Chairperson : Dr. P. Govinda Reddy

- Speakers** : 1. Dr. Ms. S.M. Jadav
2. Sri. Samir Barua
3. Dr. S.B. Singh
4. Dr. A.R. Chaudhary

Panel on Literature

- Chairperson** : Dr. A.P. Singh
- Speakers** : 1. Representative of Ven. Norbu Lama
2. Dr. Ms. V. Mittal
3. Dr. K.P. Singh
4. Dr. R. Mehta
5. Dr. Ms. Atreya Rani
6. Dr. Hari Shankar Sukla

VALIDICTORY SESSION December 10, 1997

03.30 - 04.30 p.m.

- Chairperson** : Professor G.C. Nayak
- Chief Speaker** : Professor R.S. Sharma
- Other Speakers** : Prof. B.R. Subramanyam
Ven. Dharmaviriyo Mahathera
Ven. Chuan Yin
Ven. G.K. Lhundup
Ven. Ken-etsu Abiko
Professor Dr. Dipak Kumar Barua

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VATTAMĀNA KĀLĀLOKAGAṆASAMĀGAMAPARĪSĀYA MAHATTABUDDHĀSĀSAN' ĀRUPATTAM

Dr. S. Sāsanānanda

Nava Nalanda Mahavihara

Nalanda

Sabbappaṭhamanti yo Mahākāruṇikaloka-nāthasabbaññūsabba-
vidūsammāsambuddho'ti sveva bhagavā' ti tameva bhagavantam sammā-
sambuddham abhivādetvā ca yathā—

Uttamam uttamaṅgena namassitvā mahesino,

Nibbānamadhudam Pādapaṅkajam sajjanālinam,

Mahāmohattamam loke dhamsentam dhammabhākaram

Pātubhūtam mahātejam dhammarājodaya cale.

—Jinacarita

Tena mahākāruṇikalokanāthena sabbaññū-sabbavidū-sammāsam-
buddhena desitappakāsit'ovāditadhammo'ti. Ayameva dhammo
buddhasāsanadhammo buddhasamayadhammo'ti. Ayam saddhammo'pi
viññāyati saccalokadhammo'pi kathīyati ca.

Attite kira chaṭṭhe Khiṭṭhavassasatakapubbe ca imasmim loke
visesena imamhi Jambudipe tena bhagavantena yo gavesitasacca-
dhammo'ti visesato bahujaṇa hitāya bahujaṇa sukhāya lokānukampāya
atthāya hitāya sabbamanuśālokavasantānam bahūnam janānañca.
Aparabhāge aparañca param ayam sabbappakāradukkhā-
nirodhasaccadhammo'ti ādikalyāṇam majjhekalyāṇam pariyosānakalyā-
ṇam sabbalokamanussānañca.

Ayam mūlabhāgasaccadhammo'ti kathīyati ca sabbappaṭhamam
bārānasiyam isipatanamigadāye vasamtānam pañcavaggiyānam

dharmacakkappavattanam'ovādadesanā tena bhagavatā desitā pakāsītā' hosī' ti tato kālato pāṭṭhaya ayaṃ saccadhammo paṭiṭṭhito ca'ti.

Buddhānasāsanānusārena visesato (i) Paṭiyatti, (ii) Paṭipatti (iii) Paṭivedhocā' ti sabbappaṭhamam ayaṃ vedītabbo jānitabbo amhehi sikkhākāmehi sekkhehi ca, Seyyathīdam—

Imaṃ yathāvuttam pariyattīdhammaṃ yathānusārena ovādītabuddhānasāsanam nīḍiṭṭhabuddhasāsamakasaṃmayam yathātatham yathādhammaṃ sukhumākārena atisāyādhikatar' ussāhena ajjhayanam katvā ca atha ca kho ayaṃ paṭipattidhamme yathārupam tadānusārena ācaritabbo anusaritabbo anuyuñjitabbo bhāvītabbo dhāritabbo rakkhītabbo annurakkhitabbo paṭipannabbo c'eva'ti.

Yo ko'pi visesato sikkhākāmasekho imaṃ paṭipattisāsanam yathā-nurūpam paññattam ācarati anusarati sveva paṭipattidhammaṃ udāhu ca sammāsambuddhadhammaṃ sabbasattānam sabbamanussānam sabbajanañña seyyathīdam—

Karaṇīya mettāsuttaṃ evaṃ vattan'ti ca yathā

(i)

*Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttam
āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe,
evaṃ pi sabbabhūtesu
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam.*

(ii)

*Na ca khuddam samācare kiñci
yena viññūpare upavadeyyum,
sukhīno vā khemīno hontu
sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhītattā.*

(iii)

Ye keci paṇabhūtatthi

*tasā vā thavara vā anavasesā,
dīghā vā ye mahantā vā
majjhimā rassakāṇukathulā.*

(iv)

*Na paro param nīkubbetha
nātimaññetha katthaci naṃ Kiñci,
byārosanā patighasaññā
nāññāmaññassa dukkhamiccheyya*

(v)

*Tasmātiha evampi vuttañca-yathā
sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa
sabbe bhāyanti maccuno,
attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā
na haneyya na ghātaye*

Dp - 129

(vi)

*sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa
sabbe jivitaṃ piyaṃ,
attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā
na haneyya na ghātaye*

(vii)

*Na hi verena verāni
samantidhā kudācanaṃ,
averena ca samanti
eso dhammo sanantano*

Dp-

(viii)

sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ

kusalassa upasampadā

sacittapariyodapanam

etaṃ buddhānasāsanam

Dp-

yatha ca evaṃṃ pavuttani etaṃhi katahi bhūtamhi ce.

Manussasaṅghasāmaggi sukhāyatī' ti ayaṃ samaggidhammo sabbakalamanussānam majjhe sukhāvaho ca, Yathāvuttaupades'ovādo'ti yā mettābhāvanā kātabbā bhāvitabbā amhehi sabbehi manussehi cā'ti amhe sabbe ce yathāvuttaṃ tadānusārena saddhā citten'ussāhenā anusa-rāmā'ti tena hi anantaram na ceva kalaho nāma uppādo bhavissatī'ti sabbesānam manussāha majjh'eva jātuca. Na ca kho adhīkatar'addhā imasmiṃ paṭṭhaviḷoke yuddhasamaraviggaho c'eva bhavissatī'ti phalavasena ca tato paṭṭhāya evameva imasmiṃ akhilabhūmaṇḍale sabbā-tṭhāne nirupaddavena nirāsāṅkena nibbhayaṭāya ca sukha-santi hi. virā-jissati dhuvam cirañeati maññe.

Buddhasāsanam samāseṇa sacchikarotī'ti tasmātiha ayameva dhammo tathataṃ ihalokadiṭṭhidhammo'pi kathīyati vaññāyati ca yathā-

Svākkhāto bhagavato dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akālīko ehipassiko opanāyiko paccattam veditabbo viññūhī'ti.

Ciraṃ tiṭṭhatu saddhammo.

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RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND SUFISM IN MODERN SOCIETY

Dr. R. Isri Arshad

Medical Officer

Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda

The Modern Society : The world today is the world of seconds. It was the time when Fa-hein and Hiuen Tsang took years together to reach India from China. But today, barriers of communications have been broken by the invention of railways, steamships, motorcars, aeroplanes and telecommunications. Even events and happenings can be seen on television and through other sources. Many ancient myths have been broken. But the modern inventions have also given greater powers to some nations and to the other countries' degradations to such an extent as slavery and colonialism. Scientists tell us that our earth was formed some 5000 million years ago., And then thousand years back man invented the wheel and started travelling long distances.

The 20th century will always be noted as a great age of scientific and technical achievement. The productivity of the earth has been made greater by vast irrigation enterprises. French engineers have made barren Sahara into a land of plenty by the extraction of oil and natural gas. At the second half of the 20th Century, mankind burst the boundaries of his own planet and began travelling in inter-planetary in space. Russians launched the first man into space in 1961. The Americans have three times launched man on the moon. The civilisation of the 20th century is in many respects, the filling culminations of endeavours and aspirations of the past. Socially, too, there have been great advances in medical science rapidly.

The society of the Past : The history of the society begins from commune life to monarchy and distruction and reconstruction. It has periodically been influenced by super humans, prophets and saints. Man by nature is a great exploiter and in the past, there has been differences between high and low. In order to equalise the social status, endeavours have been done.

Man's social and civilisational story can be divided into three periods- ancient history, medeaval history and modern history. It is the ancient civilisation which saw Lord Buddha struggling against the cruel happenings of the differences between the high and low. The ancient civilisation also saw Lord Mahavira and Jesus Christ pursuing the same line that every man is equal and served the man so that the Inner is pleased. The renaissance in Middle Ages saw the change from religious approach to material approach. The modern approach begins from year of revolutions as said in 1848, left the map of Europe virtually unmarked. And with the passage of time, World War I and II have been fought. Imperialism has almost come to a standstill and world is seeing the rise of nationalism.

Evils of present society : The present society though, has become a close affair due to scientific developments but slowly it is developing into a world of mistrust and a society of exploiters and self-seekers. H.A. Davies in his book "An Outline History of the World", has said, there is still much about modern civilisation that is ugly and disquieting, such as pauperism, unemployment, slums and worst of all, war, the most enduring relic of barbarism. Europe has lost its supremacy in the world. Asia is a seething cauldron. There are many dark shadows over Africa and the menace of militant Socialism has cause the world to be divided into many hostile camps. The genius of secientist has been used to devise more and more terrible weapons of distruction such as Atom Bomb-two of which wiped out the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasakhi in 1945. The Hydrogen bomb has since been discovered, is more destructive and another world war may mean the end of civilise society. Selfishness and fear still dominate men's minds. Today, crime has crept in every walk of life, slums, racial barriers, class hatred, unlimited growth of population and degree of individual wisdom and selfishness runs beyond the realm of possibility.

The lust to amass wealth and live in world of selfishness, ease and supremacy, continues unabated all over the world. The story of Sukarno's wife in Sumatra, Hawala Scam in India and story of Dr. Watt and Christine Killer and the latest death fo Princess Diana still hound in our ears.

The say of religion in face of evils : In this world, men are in different places and they are different. Men are equal on the basis of their common humanity, though, no individuals are the same in their intellectual and spiritual framework, as much as in their physical complexion. People of different thinking, religion both as an individual experience and practice and as a social vehicle carrying the individual members of a particular society in their progress in life, must ipso facto present a bewildering series of diversities. It is not at all a single religion with a creed to which every body must subscribe. It is rather confederation of different kinds of approach to Reality that is behind life.

Life is eternal. Men have come, men have gone and men are coming. It has always been that selfish has created differences in society. Good men have been coming in this world to save the oppressed one and bring charm and serene. They had their experiences and they told the world to follow that experience and in the process, created rules, rituals and dogmas. These have been named different religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism.

Although, the modern people know more about universe than their primitive ancestors knew, they still have to admit that there are forces in the universe which they do not understand and they cannot control. This inability is the mother of origin of religion. The early men feared every thing that they failed to control and named it God. With the passage of time, religions grew. The 6th century B.C. was the period of great teachers. Confucious and Lao Tse in China and Gautam Buddha in India. At about the same time two great Hebrew prophets - Ezekiel and Deutero Isaiah - were at work in Palestine. India also saw Lord Mahavira preaching non-violence during the period of Lord Buddha. Then came Jesus Christ who preached for men's equality and lastly had come Prophet Mohammad who gave a practical face to equality of humans by perpetuating Namaz five times every day. Sikhism is the last in India to come. And so, religion has a great say in man's life, right from the beginning of civilisation.

Buddhism as past experiment and present applications : Any experiment proved to be successful in the past, will always serve the same purpose when utilised. The world today is on the brink of disaster. And only universal

brotherhood can save it from destruction. Sword has always surrendered before the humility and serene. A dejected Angulimala with the sword in his hand, disturbed the peace, calmness and serenity of the Nalanda jungles. His sword couldn't deter Lord Buddha in his mission to win Angulimala through love and peace and the latter submitted to the Buddha.

Thousands of years back, Lord Buddha stood for truth, non-violence and piety towards the whole mankind and the architect Ashoka gave the true face of his sayings to the world.

Before the advent of the Buddha, the social and religious condition of India was in a very deplorable state. Truthfulness and religious favour were almost pushed to the background and all sorts of formalities and heterodoxy became the way of life. The situation was such that the common man did not understand what was truth and essence of religion. There was a very wide gap between the haves and have nots. The common man especially those belonging to the poor, backward and downtrodden strata were suppressed and tortured by a handful of persons of affluence and high status.

When Buddha attained the enlightenment at Bodhi Gaya, he went to Sarnath and turned his wheel of Dhamma and gave his sermon to the five monks (Panch Vagghiya Bhikkhu). Buddha moved from one place to another and preached his Dhamma. The keystone of Buddhism is truth, non-violence and piety towards the whole mankind. People in very large number became his disciples and entered his Sangha because for them, Buddha came as a messenger of love, non-violence and hatred for none. He became the beacon of light in darkness and ignorance and dogmas.

The biggest contribution the Lord Buddha gave to the philosophy of living a peaceful life in this world, was his theory of Majjhima Patipada that is, the theory of middle path. The Buddha said that if you pull the strings of the Veena (musical instrument) very hard, it will break and if you keep it very loose, it will not produce any musical sound. For getting smooth and sweet music, you will have to maintain the middle path and avoid the extremes. This theory of middle path worked as a magic for promoting world peace and

goodwill. For emancipating the mankind from sufferings he laid stress on Dukkha, Dukkha-Samudaya, Dukkha Nirodha, Dukkha Nirodha-Gāminni-Paṭipadā (sorrow, origin of sorrow cessation of sorrow and the way of cessation of sorrow respectively). Buddhism attracted kings, businessmen and the common people in a very large number. Although, Ashoka won the Battle of Kalinga, he realised the futility of the power of the sword and spear. He abandoned the sword and the path of hostility. Instead, he became a disciple of Buddhism. He sent his brother and daughter to Ceylon to preach the Dhamma of the Buddha. He sent religious emissaries to a large number of countries and Buddhism spread far and wide.

After independence, Free India Constituent Assembly adopted the Wheel of Dhamma and placed it in the middle of the tri-colour. Gandhiji was also an apostle of peace. The first prime minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru always kept a bust statue of Buddha on his table and was always inspired by his message of peace and love to mankind. Buddhism has always stood for peace and brotherhood.

Buddhism spread outside the borders of India, but it became extinct by the time Islam came to the West Indian border preaching equality of man in practical form. The most potent cause of the decline of Buddhism in India was the loss of Royal patronage. The monasteries were the chief strongholds of Buddhism while the strength of Jainism lay rather with mass of followers. Hence, Jainism survived. But Buddhism perished in its ruins. The Muslim invasion gave a death blow to monasteries. In the contest between Hinduism and Buddhism the former owed the victory which it obtained in India, to the assimilative social influence. The struggle continued from the fourth to the ninth century, after which Buddhism was clearly defeated and survived only in special localities.

The present upheaval in Indian society is due to Baba Bhim Rao Ambedkar's conversion of Buddhism and due to continued efforts of Buddhist from outside India, slowly Buddhism is giving a comeback. And today also it is one of the greatest factor in international brotherhood. Fujii Guruji was the burning example as he has set up 80 Stupas in India alone apart from other parts of the world. In fact, after the conclusion of the World War II, Guruji

decided to start a movement for establishing world peace by means of setting up Vishwa Shanti Stupa in different parts of the world.

The hinduism and christianity : In India, the oldest religion is Hinduism. Indian tradition acknowledges two main strands in Indian religion - the Vedic or the Nigama and the Tantric-Pauranic or the Agama. The Vedic tradition is mainly the Aryan tradition, and the Agama tradition is basically the pre-Aryan tradition. Some writers explain Indian religion as the worship of nature spirits, others as the veneration of the dead. By the time of Upanishad, that is about 600B.C., we trace three clear currents in Indian religion which have persisted up till now. i) The first is ritual ii) Second, the Hindus lay stress on ascetism and self-mortification iii) The deepest conviction of Hindus in all ages is that salvation and happiness are attainable by knowledge. But any attempt to describe Hinduism as a whole leads to startling contrast. It commands human sacrifices and yet counts it a sin, to eat meat or crush an insect. The Brahmin caste still rules the roost. The Vern in Vedas took a gory look in 600 B.C. which resulted in the spreading of Buddhism and Jainism in Bihar.

Christianity, on the other hand, came to Indian soil long ago. Indian Christian trace the origin of their Church and Christianity with the coming of Apostle Thomas at the shore of Kerala. The Christianity was preached by Jesus Christ who lived at Nazerath in Israel. Jesus said to help the poor, not to take revenge and love even your enemy. The religion spread far and wide but the practical Christianity was of the form of colonialism. Difference between ruler and ruled existed. Even Apartheid formulae were followed in India. Many doctrines preached by Christianity such as love of God, salvation by faith and the incarnation had been throughout India before the Christian era, so preaching by missionaries seemed to be a very old tale. And so in India to this day, there were few takers of that faith. The Christian culture failed to influence India. S. Abid Hussain in "The National Culture of India", arrives at the following conclusion - i) Indians were satisfied with their own culture ii) They were not even impressed when the British Christians came into power and so for a world peace soletion. India has the experiment of the past and the present methods and resources are available.

Islam and its sufism : Islam is a prophetic religion of a comparatively late origin. It has its origin in the teachings of Prophet Mohammad. His teachings are regarded as final and they are to be observed and followed by all. Mohammad was born in Arabia in the year 570 A.D. Here Prophet preached a religion of strict monotheism and a life devoid of any ritualism or idolatory. Islam is the religion with the Book Holy Quran which is equal for all Muslims of the world. It has a Kaba - the House of God and all have to face towards the same Kaba. To spread humanism and Pan-Islamism, they have the Haj. Islam teaches an ethics of perfect purity, service of humanity and brotherhood of man. It strictly adheres to equality of man-man of any origin, of any place. Indian poet Iqbal has said :

"Ek hee Saf mein khare ho gaye Mohmood-o-Ayaz

Na koi Banda raha na Banda Nawaz

Bandao Sahebo Mohtaj Ghani ek huae

Teri Sarkar mein pahu-nchen to sabhi ek huae"

('Mohmood (the master) and Ayaz (the slave) stood in one line

There was no Lord or no servant

The poor lay man, the rich and affluent became one

Whoever presented himself in Your Presence, they all became equal)

With this doctrine, Islam came on the shore of Sindhu Valley in the year 711 A.D. This incoming of Islam became latent. By the 10th Century A.D. much had changed in Islamic monotheism and due to effect of mingling during the period of Haroon Rashid, the Islam came under the effect of Buddhist teaching and a section of Muslims away from the orthodox and rulers, got ascendancy and importance. And they were called Sufis. Sufis represent the mystical trend in Islam. The word Sufi is derived from the Arabic word Suf which means wool. As they always countered the first row, they were called men of the front i.e. Suf-e-Awwal. The name Sufi was originally given to such Mohammadan saints who wore uncoloured, coarse woollen cloth as a symbol of renunciation of the worldly comfort. Later on, the name was specially associated with Muslim mystics. It is a kind of pantheistic monism. The Sufis take the union of the soul with God. This can be achieved by anyone. Sufi mystics like Rabia and Hallaj lived and died for

such faith. Rabia - the lady mystic said "My Beloved is with me always and for his love, I can find no substitute." The general spirit of Sufism, of course, did not fit with the spirit of Islam, but the Persian philosopher Al-Ghazali worked out a reconciliation and found out ways where any one of any faith can respiration and get solace and peace. Amir Khusro has said :

"Baat Agan Kahdini Mose Naina Milaeke"

(You saw me and through seeing, you have told His Truth)

A Sufi once claimed "Har chees ke darkane namak Rafut, Namak Shud"

(Whatever went to the mine of salt it turned into salt)

So whoever come in contact with the Sufi, he becomes the man of the world.

To trace further origin of Sufism, it is to be added that Qushairi, author of the Risala (Treatise), says that the men of Kufa in Arabia were known as early Sufis. Sufi Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri has put Sufism like this : "A Sufi is a person who is completely lost to himself, exists only in God, is freed from the hold of the lower self and is conjoined to the Reality of all realities". Thus, it is for him, essentially a human phenomena rather than a specifically Islamic one. Herein lies the call that even Sufism can be a source of world peace through mutual understanding and pray of God in any form. Sufism is spreading and as stated by Paul Jackson in the book "The Muslims of India " Beliefs and Practices" that "We can make a judgement that like English language, Sufism believes in assimilation and so it is growing. Assimilation is a sign of life and good health."

Sufism as a movement in the world and in india and names of sufi saints in India : Sufism is growing. It took a shape of world movement during the 10th century A.D. when rulers of Islam were crushed by no-believers in Iran and Persia. They left the throne and went to far and wide corners of the world. Anyone who became a famous Sufi, tended to attract disciples. Gradually, a different form developed which was wider in scope, providing a pattern of living which could be reproduced in a widely diffused geographic setting. These were the great Sufi orders (Silsila) like Suharwardi order, Qadri

order, Chishti order of Moinuddin Chishti (D. 1236). The reality of mystical love reached a high point in Al-Hallaj who was martyred in 922.

The Arabs had conquered India in 711 A.D. and the Muslim influence soon spread to Multan. Al-Hallaj came to India and left the indelible imprint on the minds of the people. Punjabi and Sindhi poems still resounds with his name. Sufi Hujveri ended his life at Lahore. But Sufism in India began in the history with the arrival of Moinuddin Chishti. He died in 1236 at Ajmer. Moinuddin's disciple, Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki settled in Delhi. He died in 1235. Baba Fariduddin settled in Ajodhan. It is important to notice that the Guru Granth compiled by Guru Arjun in 1604, contained a chapter of verse attributed to Sheikh Fariduddin.

Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya was named Mohammad by his parents. People called him Mahboob-e-Ilahi. He lived at Delhi and died in 1325. Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri told about him that he was a holy man. Amir Khusro - the Persian and Urdu poet was his disciple. The other name in renowned Sufi of India, is Hazrat Mir Syed Ashraf Jahangir Samnani. He belonged to Samnan Royal family and always prayed near Panhessa of Nalanda district. His tomb is at Kachaucha Sharif.

Suffism in Bihar State and Bihar Sharif : Bihar has been the land of Gods. Here lies Nalanda which spread light to the world thousands of years back. Here was born Sita, wife of Lord Rama. Here was born Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira. Here was born Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri and here Mahatma Gandhi perfected his non-violence theory in present political atmospheric background of two World Wars. Late Sister Nivedita once said in her essay that Bihar has been the birthplace of towering geniuses. The great Chandra Gupta, his grandson Ashoka, the whole of Gupta dynasty, Sher Shah and finally, Guru Gobind Singh are more than a fair share of the eminent personalities of Indian history for one province to have produced.

Makhdoom Sharfuddin, born in Bihar, educated in Bengal, became disciple at Delhi but returned back to Bihar Sharif to lie down here.

The Bihar Sufis who belonged to Wujudia School, believed that everything is He (Hamma Oast) and reconciled religion with philosophy. Early Bihar Muslims - Sheikh Aaz of Gaya and Ahmad Bihari were put to death for this dogma by Sultan Firoze Shah Tughlaq. Researches have revealed that Sufism had reached Bihar and its neighbouring regions even before the Turkish conquest. Its earliest adherents belonged to the Chishti and Suharwardi order of the Sufis. Some well-known Sufis are Shahabudin, Pir Jagjot of Jethuli, Badre Alam of Choti Dargah, Mir Fazlullah Gosain of Daira, Fariduddin Tawaila Bux of Chandpura, Ahmad Isa Taj of Bhainsasur, Ataullah Baqhdali of Mirdad and Syed Sadruddin Zahidi - all belonging to the town of Bihar Sharif. Madaria and Shuttaria orders also once existed and flourished here. The Qadri order is said to be now one of the chief orders of this province. The most important of all the Sufi orders in Bihar however, was the Suharwardi, especially its sub-section, Firdausia Silsila, one of whose most celebrated saints was Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri, who was born at Maner in 1263 and died at Bihar Sharif in 1381.

Makhdoom Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri his teachings and values in the present society : It was 1st January 1993. The atmosphere at Bihar Sharif was still surcharged with the settling dust of Babri Masjid demolition in December 1992. But people of the area have so much faith in the mysticism of the saint that in the morning of the 1st January, on his tomb were present Munna Lal Jain, Dr. R. Isri Arshad (myself - a Muslim) and five other Hindus including a Hindu lady with flowers. For more than 700 years, his message have paved the way for secularism, mutual understanding and tolerance. Dr. J.N. Mishra, the ex-chief minister of Bihar, is a great believer in him. The tomb at Bari Dargah, Bihar Sharif has been renovated and beautification done. Most of the modern architecture have been done by Madrasa Baba, yet another Fakir of the place. The place has been visited by rich and poor, high and low. It was visited by Sanjay Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Giani Zail Singh and the present Governor of Bihar, Dr. A.R. Kidwai. Father Paul Jackson of St. Xavier School, Patna is a great admirer of the saint. Father has translated a book of Makhdoom Sharfuddin, the Hundred Letters in English from Persian. Father Jackson believes that Makhdoom was a lively saint. Makhdoom Sharfuddin was born in Maner, a town about 20 miles west of

Patna, in Bihar state, adjacent to Bengal in north east India in Circa August 1263. His father was Sufi Yahya. The anniversary of his death is annually celebrated, on 5th of Idd-ul-Fitr at Bihar Sharif. A large number of crowd goes from Bihar Sharif to Rajgir, to see the Kund where he worshipped for 12 years. Sharfuddin was educated at the local school at Maner. He then accompanied Sufi Abu Tawwama Al-Hanbali to Sonagaon, near present Dacca, in Bangladesh. He also married the daughter of Hanbali and had one son with whom he returned to Maner. He then set out for Delhi probably during 1280. At Delhi, he met members of Sufis like Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya. He then met Najibuddin Firdausi and became his disciple. On way back to Bihar, the Bihar saint disappeared into the forest of Bihia and from there, went to the Rajgir hills, famous for their association with Buddha, the countless of Buddhists, Jain and Hindu monks who reside there. Many years later, he started attending Friday prayers at Bihar. The reigning Sultan of Delhi, Mohammad bin Tuglaq (1325-1351) gave him land grant. The town known as Vihara became Bihar Sharif after his death at this place on Wednesday January 21, 1381.

Makhdoom Sharfuddīn was a man of letters. He was a great writer. His Hundred Letters, two hundred letters, Mulfazat are in abundance. He was also a Maghi poet, the local dialect at that time and wrote many Janter Mantar toward all evils. Sharfuddin was a great secular Sufi. Liberalism and lattitudinarianism were the characterstics of all the Sufis. Sharfuddin was very Catholic and broadminded in his attitude and views towards the non-Muslims. The Firdausi saint had unstimmed admiration for the supreme expression of love in Hindus and Buddhists. Genuine ascetism, according to the Sufi, results in great liberty and purification of the soul and this liberty can be acquired by a believer or an infidel. Through practising ascetism, one gains great lusture. Makhdoom's brother (son of mother's sister), Hazrat Ahmad Chiranposh, was a gifted poet and thinker and a divinely attracted mystic. He has written "Islam and Kufr" (Infidelity), became one and are of the same hue through love to those who are swimmers in the divine ocean. "Regard all religions as one and look at them all as one for divinity is one and unitless. There is no duality in

my religion. I regard the whole world as one." In the last, Makhdoom Sharfuddin has told that do things, do practical justice and love to all but do not tell your mystic experience in open.

*"Beware, don't utter a secret in public
If you be truly a lover of secrets
Have you not seen, how in the flash of love
Hallaj spoke the secret and went to the gallows ?"*

Conclusion : I am satisfied. I have gone deep into different religions and have come to the conclusion that every road leads to the same purpose, to bring peace to the common man. From God of fear to the No God of Buddhists and Jains and the Gods of Hindus, Christians and Muslims, it is the Sufi to come in the last and to proclaim Hamma Oast - every one shares the power of God. So all are equal. History is a witness that many battles have been fought in the name of religion and not the religion itself. So, religion had, has and will have relevance in days to come. It only can tie together men in a thread. Kedar Nath Tewari says "The etymology of the word religion indicates that religion is here to bind together in one thread of brotherhood". Swami Vivekanand has said "Nothing has made the brotherhood of man more tangible than religion".

But today, when the world is so close, so near, we need a "Universal religion". It will be universally accepted religion. It will play the role of binding the people together. The Ektara strikes. The tune is for every one who listens. And Sufism is the last to come in this world and work and says :

*"Ektara bole jhun jhun jhun
Sagro sansar hamar darshan"
(The single string strikes jhun jhun jhun)
(The tune is for the whole world to listen)
Love each other Lover every one
Charath Bhikkhave Charikum
Bahujan Hitae Bahujan Sukhae*

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PLURALITY IN BUDDHISM IN OUR CENTURY

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A Buddhist becomes aware of his or her personal identity in spite of plurality in Buddhism which manifests in the context of time, space and conditionality. More than 2500 years have passed when Śākyaputra Gautama had appreciated three dimensional relevance of an individual identity of a *sattva* and that of a *pudgala*. During the early phase of the Buddha's monastic organisation, Sangha, its identity had been a single-manned set up as Assaji rightly described before Sāriputta (*Vinayapitaka Mahavagga* I, 17.61). Swami Vivekananda in his Chicago speech mentioned " ... the world has never witnessed such a person who was a fearless truth-seeker as well as compassionate to all living creatures." He further identified that "Buddhism was fulfilment of Hinduism."

In course of time the teachings of the mastermind crossed the boundaries of Bharatavarsa, the land of its origin and its internationalism now spread to make Buddhism pluralistic in the above three dimensional contexts of the conventional reality. For the last couple of centuries the international socio-political scenario of the globe has been changing so fast through rapid progress in media instrumentation as one's lien to single identity becomes archaic. That adds a plus point in modern societies of our century.

In the ancient Bharatavarsa institutional religions played an important role in respect of a person's identity. Because the agricultural engagement was the common ground to meet each other. The elitism blended by priesthood; however, nurtured religious pluralism as best as they could in the past.

The westerners after their mercantile entry in India in the 18th century noticed multifarious diversities among the then inhabitants of the country. They preferred to respect the religious diversity for expanding special expo-

sure to their own church, i.e., Christianity. Thus plurality in institutional growth became prominent in the case of India for the last couple of decades.

Now our Twentieth century comes to almost an end; in other words the second millennium after the Christ will be over. The human societies have advanced and welcomed the latest progress in science and technology as the contributions of our age. We may name it modernism in the time context which is always relative. The awareness of pluralistic identity in respect of a person has been diversified under the socio-economic categories like the developed, the developing or the backward on the conditionality context. That presupposes the fostering of self identity with a reasonable egoistic self-claimed denomination. Modern societies, therefore, justifies how to enrich egoistic expansionism towards the self-satisfaction by utilising the nature around the human beings. With the pace of progress made so far in the sphere of science and technology the egoistic expansionism overrules by the name of developing status of modernisation.

On the other hand, the universities in the British India encouraged academic pluralism in order to nurture their colonial control by utilising their 'policy of divide and rule'. The European scholars like Schopenhauer, Max Mullar, Rhys Davids, and others in search of Orientalism accepted Buddhism with its various academic diversities leading to an emphasis on reasoning and nontheistic approach.

As a result of innovation of academic pluralism envisaged by the western academicians, the creed identity between the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist has become weaker. Whereas a new academic disciplinary class-consciousness generated, i.e. the Buddhist scholars, or the Pali scholars as distinct from Sanskrit or Vedic academicians and so on.

Meanwhile, a novel group-identity in India (Bharat) is exposed for the last five decades by declaration of oneself as belonging to the groups either secularist or religionist. Above that, some prefer to hold a middle path by claiming that he or she holds 'no-religion'. Institutional religiosity has also been diverse when Hinduism being a religion of majority, holds several socio-religious lineages like Śaiva, Śākta, Vaiṣṇava, Saura, Gāṇapatya, Dasānamī,

etc. Among the religions of minorities like Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jaina and Christianity, plurality prevails. It may be sensitive now-a-days to go in details about separate religionists in Bharat when the politicisation of religions encourages their lacking in tolerance and mutual understanding.

In spite of multiplicity in lineages of the Vedicist, who were broadly identified as the Hindu after the advent of the Musalman in this country by the cent. 10-11 A.D. tolerance played an important role in many cases. Thereby the individual identity and the collective identity with reference to the observance of ritualistic religiosity between the Hindu and the Musalman became reserved for centuries until the Christians entered in the 18th cent. A.D. A composite culture growth in mediaeval India was contributed by the Hindu and the Musalman towards an integration in spite of diversity in the total scenario. The Buddhists who had then been in the Himalayan region had their cultural exchange with the local Hindus and the local Musalmans to some extent with the least disturbance.

In India, tolerance have played an important role among the people to make each other meet with the awareness of pluralistic identity of being the developed, the underdeveloped, the developing or the backward in contrast to others. That means the fostering of self-identity with some egoistic denomination. Modern societies, therefore, seek the measures how to enrich self-satisfaction by application of the amenities produced by the modern science and technology.

The identity of Buddhism revived in Ganga-Brahmaputra belt of Eastern India with the initiative of Queen Kalindi who invited the Buddhist Sramanas with arduous faith and ritualistic observances. A new facet in Buddhism had been added to the religious plurality among the Indians and that is accepted since then all over the country. The contributions of Ven. Kripasaran Mahasthavira who was responsible for Buddhist renaissance in India by the establishment of the Buddha Dharmankur Sabha (Bengal Buddhist Association) in Calcutta and of Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala by installation of Mahabodhi Society of India with its headquarters also in Calcutta deserve mention.

Moreover, the Buddhists who had migrated from Bhoṭa-deśa (Tibet) and settled in the Mid-Himalayas of Bharatavarsha preserve their identity uninterruptedly though they are secluded from the Indo-Gangetic or Ganga

Brahmaputra belt of North India. They had their commercial access upto the Tarai and foothills of the Himalayas and maintained their identity peacefully.

The Buddhists in India inherit the creed identity by birth, as the Britishers nourished the birth based casteism and religious pluralism to identify the Indians under their jurisdiction of control. Our National Government also continues the same practices.

A separate identity of the Buddhists has also been revealed after a mass-initiation led by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in 1956. Since then, the Buddhist population and the demographic statistics go higher due to occasional initiation led by the venerable monks in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Needless to mention that their faith, and ritualistic observances in Buddhism are explicitly enthusiastic and thoroughly organised.

At the International level, Buddhism has several folds to designate as, Indian Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, Korean Buddhism, Bhutanese Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Mongolian Buddhism, Thai Buddhism, Myanmar (Burmese Buddhism), Sri Lanka (Ceylonese Buddhism) and so on. These political statewise nomenclature in Buddhism brings forth plurality in Buddhist practice and diversity in interpretations of the basic teachings as laid down in various branches of Buddhist *Tripitaka*.

Such tendency prevailed historically when the Buddhist missionaries moved out of the boundaries of the then Bharatvarsa. In that respect the vision of Upagupta and royal patronage of Asoka could leave a room to be pluralistic in order to cope with the local alienation by the immeasurable excellence (*pāramitā*) of tolerance (*kṣānti*) and that of vigour (*vīrya*) having Bodhisattva resolution (*praṇidhāna*) in the altruistic mind (*bodhicitta*).

The adventurous march of the Buddhist missionaries in different parts of Asia and in the Yavana Saka countries (Parthia, Bactria, Ionian Greeks) had set examples in history of mankind. The Śaivas, the Śākta, the Saura and the Gāṇapatya cults also entered in South East Asia in the first millennium after the Christ.

Also Islam and Christianity spread in various countries since institutions were set up. In cultural growth of the countries where the Buddhists could render missionary activities, they succeeded to earmark their distinct identity with crosscultural assimilation. As a result of that, separate nomenclatures like Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, Thai Buddhism, Sri Lankan Buddhism signify separate identity with something distinct from that which developed in India upto 1200 A.D.

The Buddhist missionaries adopted separate measures to adjust themselves with the strange circumstance in different countries for the spread of the teachings of Buddha. As a result of that, each Buddhist country had separate culture stratum and identity in spite of their adherence to Buddhism. The common bases however, remain, the same, which constitute the core of Buddhism namely,

- i. *Pratitya-samutpāda*, the conceptual rationality in understanding the dependent origination of phenomena through the sequence of cause and effect.
- ii. Trinity of *anitya*, *duhkha* *anātma* i.e. impermanence, suffering essencelessness regarding that which is constituted as *pratityasamutpada* (dependently caused and effectuated)
- iii. Four Noble Truths such as, the suffering, its cause, cessation of the cause and eightfold ways to cease the cause of suffering
- iv. The eightfold way is enumerated in the Buddhist texts repeatedly, viz. 1. proper words, 2. proper action, 3. proper means of livelihood, 4. proper exertion, 5. proper mindfulness in right way, 6. proper meditation, 7. proper resolution, and 8. proper view.
- v. As and when the suffering is ceased by the practice of above eightfold way distributed under the practices of moral precepts (*sīla*), mental concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) the unconditioned Nirvāṇa, the state of Bliss or Ānanda becomes unveiled.

In spite of diverse approaches in forming plurality of Buddhism the common base of the Dharma integrates the Buddhists all over the globe.

For the socio-economic equality of the inhabitants of the human world and thereby for availing World Peace, the Buddhists have been verily concerned for the last five decades. An instance may be referred when the victors i.e. the Super Powers of Allied Forces invited Peace Parley at Los Angeles after the Second World War had been over. The question of granting freedom to Japan was raised as Japan had been one of Axis States in defeat standing in queue for the mercy of the Super Powers. A lone voice is said to have been submitted by a Buddhist diplomat from Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) to plead for granting freedom to Japan with reference to a couplet from the *Dhammapada*.

*na hi vereṇa verāṇi sammantidha kudācana !
avereṇa hi sammanti eso dhammo sanantano ||*

An impact of the wise saying of Buddha enroused consensuous non enmity in considering pardon to grant freedom to Japan. That diplomat of international calibre was J.R. Jayavardhana, who became the President of Sri Lanka subsequently.

The spirit of non enmity echoed in the preamble of UNESCO Charter which mentions the following : "Since wars begins in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed" (United Nations Yearbook 1946-47, New York 1947 p. 712f.)

Again, a decision was adopted in the meeting of the international scientists belonging to multi disciplines like Biology Genetics and Physical Anthropology to justify equality of all human beings living in the world today.

Racism was grossly condemned and that grossly falsified the knowledge of human biology while they are descended from the same stock and belong to the some species. (In the Minds of Men, UNESCO 1946-1971, Paris 1972 p. 227 ff).

In spite of those pious ideas of UNESCO, multiple threats to human life spread rapidly. Due to progress of science and technology and their massive utilisation by the political state administrator at the international sphere the expedients in violation of world peace have been a menace of our age such as.

1. Nuclear weapons like Perishing II or cruise missile, and faster bombing aircrafts F2, U-Bomb etc. in a race of arms production tend to massive military confrontation.
2. Ethno-racial enmity to over rule each other leads to human genocide and massive bloodshed.
3. Polito-cultural egoistic expansions prevails by name of social-democratisation, saciolisation, neo-colonisation and other repulsive hegemonies.
4. Economic disparity between the haves and the have nots maintains socio-economic castism like the developed countries, the under-developed, the developing, other backwards, the tribes, the non-tribes etc.
5. Contest among the clerical religionists imbibe with polito-cultural spread over.
6. Commercial industrialists provoke exploitation on allured consumerism.

The aforesaid situation of our contemporary world go against the Carta of United Nations Organisation which was signed on June 26, 1945. Its preamble reads the follwing.

"We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life time has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, ..."

It may be submitted humbly that the UNO should make an indoor-review to evaluate how far the Organisation has succeeded to fulfill what was avowed. Orthodox monastic Plurality in Buddhism of the International level however promulgates a new vista to cope with the menace of the world today.

In this respect contributions of Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii may be a guideline for survival of human species on the solar globe. However, the endeavours for bringing World Peace and the socio-economic equality of human beings, in spite of having colour, sex and creed variations, continue among the Buddhists at three levels. Such as,

- (a) Peace programmes at the national level to eradicate the local troubles, hegemonies and exploitations. For instance, All India Bhikkhu Sangha, Korean Buddhist Federation, PBS (Parbatya Bauddha Sangha) of Bangladesh.
- (b) Peace programmes at the continental level as ABCP (Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace).
- (c) Peace Programmes of the global level when some international Buddhist Organisations venture to promote the cause in co-operation with other Organisations like Christian Peace Conference, International Peace Bureau, World Peace Council, UNESCO and UNICEF etc. Among such international organisations of the Buddhists IBBA (International Buddhist Brotherhood Association) of Japan and WFB (The World Fellowship of Buddhists) world centre established in 1950 deserve mention.

Multifarious activities in quest of peace are being conducted to motivate peoples' awareness for World Peace and to disseminate the teachings of the Buddha for love and compassion. With the march of time the plurality in Buddhism through different organisations, whether monastic or academic, leads to generate a combined effort to face the crisis.

Up till now the Venerable monks and senior persons like Ven. Amritananda of Nepal, Ven. Latsushige Matsi of Japan, Ven. Dambajar and Khambo Lama Garden of Mongolia, Ven. Kushok Bakula of India, Ven. Khemopali of Thailand, Ven. Pak Tue Ho and Ven. Yun Ju OK of Korea, Mr. Samarasena of Sri Lanka, Ven. Thieh Minh Chau of Vietnam, Ven. Tep Vong of Kampuchia. Ven. Mahathera Visuddhananda of Bangladesh among the

Asian Buddhists are to mention as forerunners in the altruistic service for World peace and socio-economic equality of human beings with their patience, tolerance and wisdom. The present trend of countrywise nomenclature in plurality of Buddhism has bifurcated in a new experimentation of the teachings of Gautama the Buddha in public life of the world citizens.

In this respect intensive coordination and essential to promote the cause effectively. That organisational charge must be taken up at the macro and the micro level for peace and equality. It demands the involvement of all peace-loving persons with strong determination to overcome the lacunae in substantiating World Peace and socio-economic equality of the human beings. A Buddhist knows how to go ahead with tolerance, vigour and compassion.

In this respect two interdependent programmes are already being followed in the Buddhist institutions whether monastic or academic in spite of the pluralistic diversity among the Buddhists. Those are :

1. Economic self sufficiency to be attained in respect to all Buddhist institutions, monastic or academic.
2. Social welfare service centres to extend voluntary work with tolerance, vigour and compassion.

The above two approaches lead to promote ethical and cultural values conducive to inner and social peace and happiness in the public life. A couplet from the Dhammapada (Yamaka Vagga, 19) in which a greater emphasis was laid upon practice (caryā) than deliberation of the concepts (carca). "A man recites many precious sacred sayings; whereas, being careless, does not put them in practice; he will not share the merits of the righteous ones, a cowherd boy loses the merit by counting the cows of others :

*bahuṃ pi ce saṃhitaṃ bhāsamāno |
na tatkarō hoti narō pamatto |
gopō va gāvo gaṇaya paresāṃ |
na bhāgavā somanassa hoti ||*

To activate our motivations Ven. K. Sangharakshita. Thera has precisely laid down the following :

"To make this universal religion, (Buddhism) more popular so that its ideals could reach every nook and corner of the world, it is necessary to communicate with far-flung Buddhist Organizations of the world and bring them into a single community as well. It is, however, essential to identify the problems that emerge from the organization and which need to be solved by the paternal organization. Further cooperation between International Buddhist Organizations can be achieved by conducting inter-organizational meetings, seminars, dialogues, inter-monastic dialogues, meditation centres, orientation camps, organizational and management training programmes. There are some of the concrete programmes which will hopefully establish relation between Buddhist Organizations world-over."

My point of view here is very clear : the world is changing at a rapid speed. The influence of transcendental religion has become minimal, if not rejected. The teachings of Buddha today are offering moral and ethical values. Buddhism's practical and effective ways of meditation and ultimate realization of the Dhamma attracting the attention of the western people and people of developed countries. Infact, Buddhism is appealing to them because it demands no doctrinal belief, it is emphatic religion, transcendental, but through direct, realization rather than through belief. It gives freedom to question and investigate. (*Udbodhana*, Vol III, 1, Jan-Feb 1994 p 13)

In this regard the new trend has developed in our century to render altruistic service better to say, humanistic action to the societies members, or to members of human societies irrespective of colour, creed and sects. After Hiroshima and Nagashaki devastation, the Buddhists all over the world could visionalise the exhibition of the HATRED, whom the Buddha had defeated before he proceeded to Bodhimanda.

As a challenge against the HATRED in the human mind the Buddhist determined to adopt the measure what Gautama the Bodhisattva performed.

The Buddhists devote to Bodhisattva practice in humanistic action to the societies. All over the world, the latest move is to abide by the Sayings of Buddha cited above.

HUMANISTIC SERVICE PROGRAMMES (hereafter HSP) is an acute antidote against the Māra retinues the HATRED who resides in the human mind due to the ignorance (*avidyā*) leading to preconditions or latent impressions (*Samskāra*) of hateful behaviours dependently caused by *Avidyā*. HSP of the Buddhists at the international level has been common in action-oriented Buddhist organisations all over the globe. In this respect Soko Gakkai International enrolled on Nichiren outlook may be cited. Similar endeavours of the Thai Buddhists and the Indian Buddhists deserve mention. In spite of the plurality in Buddhism of our century the motivation seeks commonness. *Sabbe sattvā sukhitā hontu.*

SURVEY OF BUDDHIST CENTERS/ORGANIZATION (Academic/Cumenical/Cultural)

1	2	3	4	5
Name of Countries	Academic Centres for Buddhist Studies only monastic community organised	Universities educational institutes with Buddhist studies museu- ms libraries	Ecumenical/ monastic retreat/ community meditation centres	Cultural Society/ Socio -economic welfare healing organisation etc.
America (United States)	TB4, JB2 CBI, KB1 ThB1 MB1 SB1 VB1	BS7	TB23, JB2 CB1, KB4 ThB1, MB2 SB2, VB1	TB9, JB1 KB2, ThB1 MB1, SB1
Argentina	TB3	BS1	TB1	—
Australia	TB2, JB1 SB1	BS2	TB4, JB2 ThB3, SB2	TB3 —

1	2	3	4	5
Austria	—	BS1	TB1	—
Bangladesh	4 (ThV)	BS3	6 (ThV)	10
Belgium	TB4	BS1	—	TB3
Bhutan	TB2	BS1	—	—
Brazil	TB3, SB2	—	SB1	SB1
Bulgaria	TB1	BS1	—	—
Byilorns	TB1	—	—	—
Canada	TB7	BS4	TB10	TB3
Cape (South Africa)	—	—	—	TB1
Chile	TB1	—	—	—
China including TAR & IMAR	23	BS5	31	17
Colombia	TB1	—	—	—
Costa Pica (Central America)	—	—	—	TB1
Czech Republic	—	BS3	—	TB1
Denmark	—	BS1	TB2	TB2
Estonia (Russia)	1	BS1	—	TB2
Finland	1	—	—	—
France	TB18, ThB1	BS4	TB10, SB4	TB1, ThB6
Germany	TB10, ThB2	BS7	TB4, SB2	TB7, ThB4
Greece	TB2	—	IB2	—
Holand	TB5	BS1	TB2	T2
Hungary	TB2	BS3	TB2	B1

1	2	3	4	5
India	TB5	BS24	CB1, JB2 TB16, Th 32 SB10, VB2	Thv23, NB4 CB1, JB2 SB2, MB3 KB1, ThB2 TB18...
Ireland Republic	B1	—	—	TB1
Italy	TB12	BS1	TB1	—
Japan	TB1, JB	BS2	JB	TB3, JB
Kenya	TB1	—	—	—
Latvia	—	—	—	B1
Lithuania	B1	—	—	TB1
Malaysia	TB10	—	—	—
Mexico	B1	—	—	TB2
Mongolia	B3	—	TB1	TB1
Natal (South Africa)	—	—	TB1	TB1
Nepal	B1 TB3	—	TB32(N2)	TB1
New Zealand	TB2	—	TB3	TB1
Norway	T1	BS1	—	—
Peru	—	—	—	T1
Phillipines	—	—	—	T1
Poland	TB2	—	—	T1
Port Elizabeth (South Africa)	—	—	—	T1
Romania	—	—	—	T1
Russia	TB4, SB2	BS6	TB9, SB1	T2, SB1

1	2	3	4	5
Spain	TB5	—	TB3	TB2
Sweden	TB2	—	SB1	TB2
Switzerland	TB5	—	SB2	TB2
Taiwan	TB6	—	—	TB2
Thailand	ThB21	ThB6	ThB11	—
Transval	—	—	—	TB2
United Kingdom	TB11	BS4	SB1, JB1 TB2, CB1	TB2
Ukraina	—	—	—	TB1
Venezuela	TB3	—	—	—
Zimbabwe	TB1	—	—	—

ABBREVIATION :

1. B - Buddhism
2. BS - Buddhist Studies.
3. CB - Chinese Buddhism
4. JB - Japanese Buddhism
5. JBN - Japanese Buddha Nichiren
6. JBZ - Japanese Zen Buddhism
7. KB - Korean Buddhism
8. MB - Myanmar Buddhism (Theravāda)
9. NB - Nepali (Vajrayāna) Buddhism
10. SB - Sri Lankan Buddhism (Theravāda)
11. TB - Tibetan Buddhism (followed in Bhutan, Nepal, the Bhotias residing in the Indian Himalayas).
12. ThB - Thailand Buddhism (Theravāda)
13. ThV - Theravāda Buddhism
14. VB - Vietnamese Buddhism

Note : The distribution is prepared on the basis of printed data available to the author.

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RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM'S IMMORTAL MESSAGE IN MODERN SOCIETY

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The emergence of Buddhism 2541 years ago heralded a revolutionary transformation in the concept of values and way of life of the people and also formulated a new rational creed close to what may be called the spirit of science and reason. Since then down the centuries Buddhism was spread over the whole of Asia and the world at large as a religion, philosophy, creed and way of life moulding a new culture and civilisation. A new creative spirit in arts, architecture, sculpture, literature and infact the entire gamut of human endeavours in every country of Asia in particular was the most decisive outcome of the influence of Buddhism.

Buddhism today, is part of the glorious heritage of mankind, it particularly shines out as an intellectually rational philosophy in the contemporary world of science and technology amidst stress and strain, violence and threats of war.

Buddhism appeals in contemporary times when traditional values are being questioned in the intellectual sceptism of the times. A modern man is disillusioned with conventional ideas, blind faith, cults and dogmas and he is immersed into scientific thoughts that have shattered many old myths and unveiled many undiscovered and unknown mysteries of human existence. Progress of science and technology has opened new frontiers of human thought. Darwin's theory of evolution and scientific analysis of man's origin. Freud's exploration into the mind and its subterranean realms, dialectical materialism and philosophical ideas of Marx and Engels, Einstein's Theory of Relativity etc. have moulded the thought pattern of the modern man to an

astonishing degree. All these resulted in the erosion of the traditional values of a modern man who does not accept the authority or injunction on any unthinking proposition without subjecting it to close scrutinizing of a sharply inquiring mind filtered by wisdom of science and new knowledge.

Buddhism maintains great appeal to modern mind probably because of sharply probing intellectual and analytical approach beyond dogmas or conventional nations. Buddha wanted every one to inquire and then accept. He did not claim any divinity nor did he ask the people to accept his words as sacrosanct and without judgement. Sharply reacting to dogmas and blind faith, the Buddha sought to liberate man from slavery to dogmas and unquestioned acceptance of any idea or doctrine. The Buddha said - "Do not accept because I said or it is written down in scriptures or handed down to you from generation to generation or inscribed in history. Test, question and examine and then accept or reject". Hundreds of years since then, such an inquiring spirit for liberation of mind from dogmas was manifested in the long-drawn movement of Renaissance in Europe close on the heels of the Dark Middle Ages. Gautama Buddha wanted man's free judgement to be awakened than be tied to blind faith. He did not want that he himself should be defied to the status of a God or be worshiped, but he only liked his doctrines to be adhered to and practised if they were acceptable in the rational judgement. However, there was development of Buddha image several centuries after his passing away. The need of subsequent human institutions, conflict of values and ideas among contending religious groups in ancient India and the impulse to graft the Buddha thought into the unthinking common masses accounted, among other reasons, for emergence of Buddha image. But here too the rational spirit pervaded for prayer before Buddha is no worship to an ideal nor beseeching of any favour to him but is invoking the spirit of the Truth - the thoughts and ideas as spelt out in the 'Sutras' chanted to arouse good consciousness.

The Buddha said that he was not revealing anything new but was only interpreting the truth as it exists in the external stream of life. This is, however, not as simple as it is said because to discover the Truth in the obvious beyond the veneer of appearances is the most challenging task that thinkers and philosophers confronted time and again in history. The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path are not dictums but are sheet anchors of the Truth

showing the Path for liberation from the endless cycle of sufferings into self-enlightenment. There is no element of devotion, mysticism or unquestioned acceptance of a spiritual dictum, one has to live and practice the Noble Eightfold Path as guidelines for moral, intellectual as well as spiritual elevation.

The Buddha founded his philosophy on the sharp analytical method of cause-and effect relations known as Paticca Samuppada or Law of Dependent Origination. All phenomena must have a cause and every cause must have an effect and this cause-and-effect relation analyses the intricate network or interaction of events and actions. The Buddhist causation may be likened to Newton's Law of Motion which says that action and reaction are equal and opposite and are bound to each other.

The Buddha, while speaking in terms of analysis and rationalism questioned the existing dogma or belief in supernaturalism to relieve human beings from their conditions. He emphasized that every man is the architect of himself and has to work out his own salvation. He discarded the idea of changeless permanent 'soul' and said that the world is in a constant flux with each object perpetually changing from one condition to another. Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher, echoed the same idea when he said - "Into the same river we go down and yet we donot go down, for into the same river so man can enter twice, ever it flows in and flows out". According to the Buddha, self of an individual is perishing from minute to minute and going for a chain of continuous changes with consciousness and 'Kamma' acting as the propelling force. The 'I' in a subjective self is not a fixed entity but is changing every second, though it does not appear so.

The Buddha emphasized 'Kamma' or action as determining a man's way - his future 'Kamma' can make a man into what he wills to be and the right kind of 'Kamma' as enunciated in Noble Eightfold Path can free him from suffering and exercise tremendous powers in changing his destiny. Buddhist Kamma is the very antithesis of fatalism. It inducts us not to ascribe our success or failure to any outside force but on our own actions. In Dhammapada, the Buddha poetically utters - "Not in the sky, not in the midst of sea, nor anywhere else on earth is there a spot where was may be freed from the consequences of his evil deed". Man is the sole moulder, creator and master

of what he is. From this point of view the Buddha explored into the realm of mind which he describes as the forerunner of all thoughts and actions.

In his analysis of mind and psychology, the Buddha delved deeper and deeper into subterranean realm which according to him constituted the guiding impulse in every outer manifestation of human action. Abhidhamma, one part of three Pitakas, has extraordinary richness and profundity in the analysis of mind.

The contemporary society in the last quarter of the twentieth century looks back to Gautama Buddha's timeless philosophy of all embracing compassion to all sentient beings, the Panchashila (Five Precepts) and the Four Brahma viharas - Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Upekkha more intensely than ever before in a world of stress and strain, threatened by the arms race, nuclear proliferation and prospect of war. The compassionate teachings of the Buddha inspire the peace-loving forces in contemporary times against the arms race and nuclear weapons threatening annihilation of mankind.

Buddhism is a religion rich in spiritual, philosophical and ethical content. It is all comprehensive, elaborate and touches life at all points. There are degrees of profundity in its principles. Some are simple and easily comprehended while others are tense and profound and demand deep study and concentration for their correct understanding. Its appeal is universal as it has its roots in the spirit of reason and tolerance, believes in love and purity and propogates the gospel of peace and spirituality.

The Exalted Buddha's message was addressed not to any particular race, religion, class, creed or community but to the world community as a whole - "For the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world". He spoke to all men and for all time. Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks - "Gautama the Buddha is the voice of Asia, and the conscience of the world."

Let the world traverse the path of peace and happiness with the bliss of sacred Buddha (*Vaisakhi*) Purnima.

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PRACTICE OF UNIVERSAL LOVE IN PRACTICAL LIFE

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Buddhism is a system of thought, a religion, a spiritual science and a way of life which is reasonable, practical and all embracing.¹ It appeals to those in search of truth because it has no dogmas, satisfies the reason and the heart alike, insists on self-reliance, coupled with tolerance for other points of view, embraces science, religion, philosophy, psychology, ethics and art, and points to man alone as the creator of his present and future life and sole director of his fortune. Buddhism believes rationalism and materialism and it is originated in the basis of genuineness.

Buddha was himself a human being. He acquired Enlightenment by dint of performance. He proclaimed that his teachings were not sent by any other supreme power. It was absolutely realized by him. So, it may be stated that Buddhism is originated by human being and that is why it is called human religion.

There are two kinds of feelings in mankind, one is human and other is brutal. Greed (**Lobha**), Hatred (**Dosa**) and Delusion (**Moha**) are instincts of the living beings. Buddhism advises to control these instincts. It is very difficult to control or to achieve them. Therefore the wiseman compared these three fold tendency with the burning fire.²

Avidity, jealousy, enmity and ignorance is the first enemy of mankind. Ignorance is the root-cause of avidity and jealousy, and addicted to avidity and jealousy the mutual fighting, cruelty, hard-higgling etc. are always happening among the two nations, community, casts or caster, class or classess and persons. The world spent billion of dollars to produce the

weapons for destructions. These modern and atomic arms would be able to destroy the whole human civilization in a moment. If a half percent money would be spent for the welfare of mankind, the world would be a heaven in a short time.

The common people always desire peace. They wish to live in a healthy world with peaceful mind. Therefore, the peace-loving people of the world made a good number of organizations in different countries and conversed how world peace would be permanent among the human beings by seminars, conferences, meetings etc. It is very shocking to mention that the extensive states of the world although invite for peace, on the other hand, their production of the weapon of destructions are not stopped. If this position is going on, World-peace would not be established. That is why, the Buddha prohibited the arms-trade.³

Buddha, the high-souled man was the first to establish brotherhood without distinction of caste and race. Twentyfive centuries ago he declared, "As the great streams, disciples, however many may be, the Ganges, Yamuna, Achiravati, Sarabhu, when they reach the great ocean lose their old name and their old descent, and bear only one name - the great ocean, so also do the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, lose their distinctions when they join the brotherhood." The outcaste as well as the prince was admitted to this order, virtues was the passport, not wealth and rank."⁴ The Buddha stated in the Vasala Sutta that there is no difference between the highly-born and lowly-born man by birth but in deed.⁵

Today, mankind is dominated by evil mental forces⁶, that is the said avidity, jealousy and ignorance. Avidity and ignorance give birth to jealousy and from the jealousy come out cruelty. As a result, begins mutual fighting against each other, a countless number of human beings are lost, humanities are trampled. To escape from this horrible condition Buddhism cordially summoned to abandon the cruelty, avidity, jealousy and ignorance, and to follow non-violence by practising the universal brotherhood. It is remarkable that Buddha's Universal love is unlimited, it is all over the universe. The practice of kindness is the very essence of the Buddhist way of life. It is a positive quality of the mind which promotes an ethical attitude. The man who

expounds to his fellow beings the love and affection which a mother reserves for her only son and says with conviction and feeling, "May all beings be happy", finds no place in his mind for avidity, jealousy and envy.⁷ It is called universal love. It should be cultivated repeatedly. For the sake of that one should need self consciousness. At first he shall have to realize all the worldly beings are as his ownself.

It is ensured that only by practising of Universal love towards the human beings the world-peace would be permanent. Firstly, Mettā should be practised towards oneself and should be wished for his own happiness and peacefulness.⁸ He would practise, "May I be happy, free from suffering, danger and enmity."⁹ He should always practise it in his daily life. Next time, gradually his mind and body would be filled with loving-kindness when he is full of peace and is free from hatred thoughts, it is easy for him to disseminate joy towards all his near and dear ones individually and collectively, wishing them peace and happiness and freedom from all kinds of sufferings, diseases, dangers, and enemies.¹⁰ Then he would comprehend what is universal brotherhood and then he can practise it towards others. He would practise, 'My teachers, parents, relatives, friends, enemies, neutrals be happy, live in happiness and free from sufferings, disease, danger and enmity.'¹¹ Just as he wishes for the peace and happiness of himself and of relatives, even so he sincerely wishes for the peace and happiness of those who are natural to him. Then he should radiate his universal love in the same way towards those who are hostile to him.

Thereafter, gradually he should stretch out his universal love towards all living beings, irrespective of caste, race, colour, sex, beasts until he has identified himself with all, making no distinction whatsoever. 'He merges himself in the whole universe and is one with all. He is no more dominated by egoistic feelings. He transcends all forms of separation.'¹² His universal love would not be great success until he loves all the living beings in the world. The great Buddha cited an example about the nature of universal love.

He said, "O monks, if some thieves or barbarians would saw the limbs of a man with a both edged sharp saw and it he actuated it being malicious, in fact he is not a follower of my precepts, because he has got detached from the model of non-violence and universal love."¹³

He, who practices of loving kindness, would not be able to do any injustice deeds such as killing, stealing, lying, slandering or using harsh language and transgressing otherwise he also develops the tendency to engage himself in the task of relieving others of suffering and agony.¹⁴ He should help his neighbours to be happy, to help them in times of difficulty, to care and look after the welfare of the poor, old, needy and the destitute.

In fact, he, who practices the said universal-love towards the living beings, he is free from avidity, jealousy and ignorance, he looks upon all with equanimity. Therefore, everyone should develop their selfconsciousness peace and harmony in their individual mind, afterwards, practice the universal love then universal brotherhood would be established.

It is stated that the Buddha was the first to establish brotherhood without distinction of caste and race.¹⁵ Only the practice of universal love towards the mankind would fetch permanent peace and happiness in the present fanatic world of malevolence. So we must try to apply this method to 'Lokattha Cariya' working for the benefit of the whole world without any distinction as regards to caste, colour or creed as is laid down by the Buddha, to refine our nature, to elevate ourselves on the scale of beings.

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RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY

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In the modern deteriorating social background practically of a global nature the relevance of Buddhism and other religions is beyond question to those who delve deep into the question of existence and continuation of human society on this planet. Like the individuals, the society or societies also pass through ups and downs. As the present society all over the world is full of violence, bloodshed, exploitation and corruptions; and these cannot be eradicated by all our arts and science education in the palatial institutions or rather university townships; the remedy must be sought elsewhere, and it is doubtless that the teachings of Gautama Buddha and other ancient sages of Hinduism and Christianity etc. have a great role in this regard.

Materialism has been a major factor behind this social depression. In the name of scientific outlook the school neo-literates rejects all old conceptions about religion and metaphysics. They advocated hedonism -

Yāvat jivet sukham jivet

ṛnam kṛtvā ghṛtam pivet

- Live happily as long as you live.

Take ghee by borrowing money.

Excessive love of science and higher technology as an infallible and supreme subject of study is responsible for the widespread materialistic and irreligious ideas and destructive activities.

The opium doctrine about religion as circulated by some among benighted masses has also done a great harm to society. They hold that religion is a narcotic drug like opium. It attracts people but also no good in

the long run. Thus open and disguised materialism of various sorts has seized upon the minds of millions of people to-day all over world and this wild, Bohemian, nihilistic society of the world brings about all sorts of unfortunate nefarious disastrous macabre happenings without any scruple.

Religion is the only possible solution to this state of things. Of course, Gautama Buddha was no stranger to violence. He was born in the Sakya aristocracy. He lived as a prince and as a sage throughout the most turbulent period in Indian history. During his life time Northern India went through the socio-political convulsion that turned Magadha and Kosala country into an empire extending from the gangetic valley to the Himalayan foothills. Often some conquests were attended by massacre. In such a situation Gautama Buddha arrived in this world with his message of Ahimsa, non-violence, karuna, compassion and Mettā, love, attitude of all mankind as of equal value, a casteless society and service to humanity. He disliked all bloodshed; and this discouraged mankind from the path of war as well as holocaust of animal sacrifice in the name of religion and useless rituals. This is his Ahimsa or non-violence.

Gautama Buddha started the Dhamma-cakka (a wheel of the law) at Migadava (Mod. Sāranāth) near Vārānasī soon after his Enlightenment at Bodhgaya. In his historic sermon he spoke of the Middlepath (*Majjhimapatipadā*) and Eightfold path (*Atthangika-magga*) to be the highest good in human life, viz., right belief (*Sammādiṭṭhi*), right aspiration (*Sammā Saṅkappa*), right speech (*Sammā-Vācā*) right conduct (*Sammā-Kammantā*), right modes of life (*Sammā-Ajiva*), right effort (*Sammā-Vāyama*), right mindfulness (*Sammā-Sati*) and right rapture (*Sammā-Samādhi*). These eight items are classified under three heads - moral precepts (*Sīla*), mental development (*Citta*) and knowledge (*Paññā*). This represents to the morality of Buddhism and leads to a man to attain *Nibbāna*, the highest truth. So his middlepath is highly significant.

Gautama renounced the worldly life to know the cause of human suffering. He reviewed the divergent philosophical problems of his time. He mainly preached ethical virtues avoiding subtle metaphysical questions. He has the mission to bring about a recognition of mankind. He profoundly

established his law of causation (Paṭicca Samuppāda) with momentariness (Ksanikavāda). This Paticcasamuppada, the law of dependent origination is regarded as one of the fundamental teachings of Gautama Buddha. The basic formula of this casual law is laid down in the Buddhist texts thus - "*Imasmiṃ sati, idaṃ hoti, Imassa uppādā idaṃ uppajjati*" - (This having been, that comes to be; from the rise of this that arises).

Gautama Buddha presented a new and nobler form of religion for mankind by the side of pre-Buddhistic Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical religion that overlooks the suffering humanity on earth and ran after a heavenly goal forgetting the Upanisadic message of - Sarvam Khalu idam Brahma - (verify all this is Brahma). He started his mission with the reform work of the society. He came to deliver a new message, a new light to the humanity groping in darkness.

Gautam Buddha's message of service to humanity is contained in this line of Pali text - "*Caratha Bhikkhave cārikam bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya, attāya hitāya, ca deva - manussānam*" - O Bhikkhus, go on with your rounds everywhere for the purpose of welfare to many, happiness to many and for the prosperity of many and well being of gods and mankind.

In this message of service there is no delimitation or apartheid policy of serving to this or that section of people. This service is open to all regardless of caste and creed. Buddha advocated the abolition of the existing social inequalities. He maintained human dignity for social justice everywhere. Slaves and kings are equal to a Buddhist monk. He virtually stresses on humanism in his religion. The universal unity of mankind is the basic concept of the religion of Buddha.

Buddhism has all along been for the non-violence, non-aggression and world peace. Emperor Ashoka (3rd century B.C.) embraced Buddhism. After the Kalinga messacre he opens a new era - an era of peace, of social progress, of religious propaganda. The era of military conquest or Digvijaya is over, the era of spiritual conquest or Dhamma-vijaya is about to begin. After the Kalinga war the older Indian Political Philosophy - gave way to a new statecraft inspired by the teachings of the sage of the Sakyas.

He abolished the sacrificial slaughter of animals and did a lot of benevolent activities for the welfare of man and beast. It is he who spread this religion of non-violence and love for all the distant quarters of Asia such as China, Japan, Ceylon, Burma etc. In the later period Kushana king Kanishka (1st century A.D.) like Ashoka also embraced Buddhism. His fame rests on the patronage of the religion of Sakyamuni.

Buddha's speeches at different places resemble Jesus' sermon on the Mount and elsewhere. Jesus also preached the service to mankind in his parable of good Samaritan and elsewhere. Jainism and Hinduism also followed the principle of Ahimsa or non-violence for the welfare of the mankind.

Buddha's message of Ahimsa or non-violence has great relevance when the present world is fraught with horrible incidents of violence between antagonistic communities, cold-war, frequent exchanges of fire in the borderlands and threats of large scale warfare. If the Ahimsa or non-violence is not adopted by mankind and various nations, humanity faces a risk of extinction in a war with nuclear warheads. There may be a lot of necessities in the world community, but Ahimsa or non-violence is an imperative necessity. Either we should have recourse to Ahimsa right now, for it is already overdue, or we must be ready for extinction in nuclear war, and here is the relevance of Buddhism at the moment.

Buddhist literature is vast and it ought to be ransacked thoroughly for Buddha's teachings in their entirety and it is hoped, a lot of much needed messages may thereby come to light as such -

"The cudgel and the sword should be laid aside", refrain from killing, maiming, plundering villages or obtaining money by threats of violence etc.

So, it may be concluded that Buddhism has an unquestionable relevance in modern society beset with unrest and violence with all sorts.

In fine I extended my heartfelt thanks to the authority of the conference, scholars and other taking part in this conference.

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BUDDHIST UNIVERSALISM AND THE PRESENT TIME

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Buddhism, as evident from its very name, is the religion, philosophy, thought or culture propounded by the Buddha during the 6th century B.C. Though his own activities may be said to have been confined in different regions of northern India only, he influenced thousands of people through his intelligent and rational thoughts and actions during his very life time. The Buddhist Order (saṅgha) was the main machinery besides the Buddha himself, that took the task of spreading the Buddha's thoughts during the life time of the master as well as afterwards. While dispatching the first batch of sixty monks, the Buddha had instructed them to spread his message for eradication of sufferings of life with the objective of benefitting more and more people—"Caratha, bhikkhave, cārikaṃ bahujaṇahitāya bahujaṇasukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussaṇaṃ. Mā ekena dve agamittha. Desetha, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ ādikalyāṇaṃ majjhekalyāṇaṃ pariyosānakalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ sabyañjanaṃ kevalaparipuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahmacariyaṃ pakāsetha."¹

The Buddha's serene, calm and compassionate personality and rational approach attracted a large number of people from different regions, castes and colours who took refuge in Him, his Dhamma and his Saṅgha. After the Buddha, Asoka, the great Mauryan emperor of Magadha, and of course one of the greatest rulers the world ever produced, was the first person to accept the responsibility of convincing the Buddha's message with universal appeal not only to different far off regions of India but even beyond its frontier. It was he, who sent missionaries to spread Buddhism to the countries like Srilanka, Myanmar, Afghanistan etc., which in due course became one of the most dominant living faiths in almost the whole of south, South East and East Asia. The wheel of Buddhism did not stop here and continued its sojourn even in

the mainland of Christianity-European and American countries. Today Buddhism and Buddhist Studies is in more advanced stage in those countries than what we observe in its homeland-India. It has proved the universal acceptability of Buddhism.

So far as 'Universalism' is concerned, it may be understood as 'an ancient and recurrent belief in universal salvation. It is suggested by certain passages in the New Testament. Acts 3:21, which speaks of the times of restitution of all things (apokatastasis panton); John 1:29, which speaks of Christ taking away the sin of the (whole) world; and Romans 5:18, which speaks of Christ's atoning act as accomplishing the justification of all men,' writes the Encyclopedia Americana.²

In the present context, the term Buddhist Universalism has been used in the sense of its universal application leaving behind the narrowness of caste, creed, colour or region, state and nation. Buddhism, indeed, embraces within its fold the entire world comprised of human, superhuman, heavenly beings, demons, beasts, insects etc. It talks for well being of all the beings already born as well as yet to be born; small, middle and big in size, movable as well as immovable, seen as well as unseen.³ Buddhism gives the message of universal peace, love, kindness and wishes good for all without any discrimination – "Sukhino vā khemino hontu, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā."⁴

Now let us talk something about the 'Present Time' which is proudly and popularly termed as 'scientific age' — an age based on scientific reasoning and logical thinking. The biggest irony of the present time is that in the blind race of wordly progress, materialistic thinking has overpowered man and has narrowed down canvas of his thinking. Day by day man is becoming more and more selfish, as he thinks for his own interests, sometimes even to his own individuality leaving behind his wife, son, daughters, parents, and other kith and kins also. Today we witness abundance of materialistic affluence, but where have gone peace of mind, social harmony, mutual trust and contentment? This is a matter of grave concern, which has taken into its grip the entire world, and we have to see whether Buddhism can provide with any practical solution of the same.

Though theory of 'Universalism' is newer one as compared to Buddhism, conceptually it was very much present in the thoughts or philosophy of the Buddha. He himself proclaimed to be 'Sattā devamanussānaṃ, - a teacher of human beings as well as of gods, who thinks for good to all, who is endowed with universal love and compassion (mahāmettā and mahākaruṇā).

Some of the salient features of Buddhism may be cited here which highlight the universalist approach of Buddhism and by which the modern world, too, can take light for a better and brighter future of humanity.

The modern world has developed complexities of life increasingly. One of the main reasons for it, seems to be continuously decreasing faith in moral values and distrust in one another. The growing materialism has confined our views to self-interest only. Whether it is relationship between wife and husband, parents and children or individual and society, lack of mutual faith is witnessed everywhere. It casts its reflection in spiritual life too. Unless faith or trust is generated there will be no chance of cohesion in life and improvement in the conditions of life cannot be expected. This is the reason, the Buddha rates saddhā (faith) as the foremost essential precondition of spiritual life. He terms saddhā as the seed of his spiritual cultivation—"saddhā bijaṃ, tapo vuṭṭhi...."⁵ Saddhā is the precious wealth in life and therefore, should be kept preserved-'Saddhīdha vittaṃ purisassa seṭṭhaṃ'.⁶ However, this wealth is not like the one lying in the treasure of a miser person. It increases if used properly and helps one in crossing the ocean of saṃsāra, i.e., repeated existence - "Saddhāya tarati oghaṃ."⁷ Even if taken at the worldly level, inevitability of trust or mutual faith is well proved. In the absence of faith, we are neither ready to listen to others seriously nor try to trust in them. We are in the grip of doubts in others intentions. It destroys the very fabric of social harmony and coordination and jeopardises the smooth sailing of life. Unfortunately modern man is suffering from such an absence of mutual faith or trust.

Buddhism provides a strong base to man to generate and develop faith. However, it distinguishes faith from blind faith and prescribes to generate and develop a rational faith. The Buddha always decries blind faith.

In his opinion, one should not follow the teacher blindly nor should seek refuge in him in the hope that he (disciple) will be rescued by the personal salvation, saintliness or mere glimpse of serene personality of the master. He should not aspire to be purified by the master's own purification. Therefore, the Buddha incites his disciples to generate self-confidence and to be their own torch-bearers - "Attadīpā viharatha, attasaraṇā anaññasaraṇā, dhammadīpā dhamma saraṇā anaññasaraṇā."⁸

The Buddha further, reveals that one gets purified or impure by dint of one's own deeds - good or bad, and that none can purify another—

"Attanā va katan pāpaṇ attanā saṅkilissati /

Attanā akataṇ paṇaṇ attanā'va visujjhati /

Suddhi asuddhi paccataṇ nāñño aññaṇ visodhaye //"⁹

Thus, placing faith as a cardinal factor, the beginning point of spiritual life, seed of spiritual cultivation, the Buddha has established its importance. Further, by distinguishing it from the blind faith, the Buddha has suggested to generate and continuously develop it till nibbāna, the eternal bliss is attained. This is a unique feature of Buddhism that simply by generating firm faith in good moral laws and without taking support of any super almighty God, a person can strive for a better harmonious relationship outwardly in the family, society, nation and the world at large, and for self purification and peace inwardly.

The next notable characteristic of Buddhism, that makes it distinct from most of the other religions and philosophies is that, there is no place of creator God, i.e. Paramātmān or Brahma in Buddhism. Though many deities of the Hindu pantheon are seen in the Buddhist literature as well, they have never been painted as creator including Brahmā. The Buddha himself has been said to act as saviour only. Though with the development of Mahāyāna, Tantrayāna etc., the Buddha got deified, he was never regarded as a creator God. The Buddha has denied the existence of such God or Gods and has revealed the phenomena with having threefold characteristics— "Sabbe saṅkhārā iccā, sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā, sabbe dhammā anattā 'ti." In other words, nothing can transcend the characteristics of impermanence, suffering

and substancelessness or soullessness. Thus, theory of Tilakkhaṇa highlights and propagates the notion of self-confidence and 'action' (kammavāda). It establishes that everyone has to reap what he sows, has to experience resultants according to his own deeds — good or bad. Deeds are the only factor for one's better or worse future — "Kammassakā, Māṇava, sattā, kammadāyādā, kammayonī, kammabandhū, kammaṇṇasaraṇā, kammaṇṇasatte vibhajjati, yadidaṃ hīnappaṇītatāyā. ti."¹⁰ Even regarding the birth in lower or higher strata or caste in the society, the Buddha emphatically establishes that a person is lower or higher not because of his birth but only because of his bad or good actions —

*"Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti Brāhmaṇo /
Kammunā vasalo hoti, kammunā hoti Brahmaṇo //"¹¹*

For the Buddha, all the social divisions between man and man are artificial or creation of man himself.

Though the Buddha challenges the Brahmanical caste system in India, his approach on social division and system is equally important for the modern society, which is inflicted by unjustifiable caste or racial divisions. It can be a befitting reply to the question of apartheid and be used as an effective measure for eradication of the same. However, the method should be non-violent, full of love and sympathy, holds the Buddha. He clearly says that enmity or ill-will can never be pacified by enmity in return, rather it gets pacified by love and goodwill only, this is a time tested law —

*"Na hi verena verāni, sammantīdha kudācanaṃ /
Averena ca sammanti, esa dhammo sanantano //"¹²*

A violence for forcible victory generates ill-will and a defeated one suffers from pain, but the one who has gone beyond the question of victory or defeat and has pacified one's sensual desires, is happy in the real sense—

*"Jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati, dukkhaṃ seti parājito /
Upasantaṃ sukhaṃ seti, hītvā jayaparājayaṃ //"¹³*

The United Nations was founded on this very theory of non-violence, good-will and amity propounded by great teacher like the Buddha.

Even in his own life, the Buddha implemented what he advocated for. He opened the door of his sangha for all without discrimination of caste, colour or creed. This is evident from the cases of Upāli, Sunītha, Aṅgulimāla, Ambapāli etc. who rose to the social fame and respect under the banner of Buddhism.

Unlike the ancient times, the modern society has developed into multi-lingual, multi-racial, multi-religious ones. To face problems arising in such a complexed world, the Buddha preaches Brahmaviharā consisting of four factors - mettā (friendliness or good-will), karuṇā (compassion), muditā (selfless joy), and upekkhā (equanimity). Friendliness is not confined to friendship which exists between two or some more individuals, but it is a good-will and love to be expanded unboundly, unlimitedly towards all without discriminating as friend or foe. Compassion is an emotion or feeling that arises on seeing someone in sorrow. On seeing others in pain, heart of a saintly person moves and he immediately initiates his efforts to rescue the suffering fellows from that pain. Because of indepth and unbounded compassion only, the Buddha is called Mahākāruṇikā (the Great Compassionate). In the Mahāyāna Buddhism, ideal of universal benevolence has been treated as the backbone of morality. There, the practitioner ignores even his own emancipation before others' well-being. He honestly reveals that he gets immense pleasure in helping others in minimising their suffering and that his own emancipation is nothing before it —

*"Mucyamāneṣu sattveṣu ye to pramodyasāgaraḥ /
Taireva nanu paryāptam mokṣeṇārasikena kiṃ //"*¹⁴

In the Laṅkāvatārasūtra, Bodhisattva goes even further saying that he will not enter parinirvāṇa unless and until all the beings of the world get rid of suffering.¹⁵ There cannot be a greater resolution than a resolution of the ideal of universal benevolence. Such a selfless benevolent mentality can effectively remove bane and sorrow from the life of suffering humanity.

Regarding the third constituent of Brahmavihāra, namely, muditā, it may be said that a true Buddhist always feels pleasure on seeing others happy. The fourth constituent is upekkhā or equanimity. An honest and true Buddhist feels concerned for others, but personally prepares himself to remain cool or to keep equanimity in case of pleasure as well as pain.

The concept of Brahnavihāra is not a theoretical idea but is very much practical and practicable in our day to day life. It cannot be confined to a particular type of family, group, society, state or nation, rather it bears the element of universal application.

If we talk of the Buddha's theory of Dependent Origination (Paṭiccasamuppāda), we find a well defined chain of links based on cause and effect. It is very much in conformity with scientific thinking of the modern time. It is a different matter that it has a broader canvas of ideas that what our materialistic or natural science explains. Theory of Dependent origination is confined neither to a particular period nor to a particular society. Rather it is universal and applicable all the time that has passed away or is yet to come. Similarly, when we consider the Buddha's views on amity and harmony in family or in social life, we find the highest moral values enshrined in them.¹⁶

Here arises a question as to who is a competent person to think and do good for others — the ideal with which the Buddha started his missionary life. We find a reference in the Aṅguttaranikāya wherein Ānanda clarifies before a group of six paribbājakas that a person under the influence of rāga (passion) neither identifies his own well-being not that of others, but when he gets free from the influence of that, he becomes able to identify egoistic well-being, altruistic well-being and also the both, i.e. common good — "Ratto kho, āvuso, rāgena abhibhūto pariyādinnaṭṭo attatthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti, paratthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti, ubhayatthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti; rāge pahīne attatthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, paratthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, ubhayatthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti."¹⁷

Besides, dosa and moha (ill-will and ignorance) too, are immoral roots which defile our mind, says the Buddha. Till they are active, real egoistic or altruistic well-being cannot properly be understood. Mind is like water. If water is dirty or instable it cannot reflect image correctly. In the same way, mind accompanied by the above defiling factors, cannot understand egoistic and altruistic well-being correctly. On the contrary, if mind is pure, it will be able to understand them properly, and by transcending the common human capabilities, will realize the Noble Truth. It has been clarified by the Buddha with a beautiful simile —

"Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, udakarahado accho vippasanno anāvalo tattha cakkhumā puriso tīre t̥hito passeyya sippisambukam pi sakkharakathalam pi macchagumbam pi carantam pi t̥t̥hantampi. Tam kissa hetu ? Anāvilattā, bhikkhave, udakassa, Evameva kho, bhikkhave, so vata bhikkhu anāvilena cittena attattham va n̄assati parattham vā n̄assati ubhayattham vā n̄assati uttarim vā manussadhammam alamariyañāṇadassanavisesam sacchikarissatī ti t̥hānametaṁ vijjati. Tam kissa hetu ? Anāvilattā bhikkhave, cittassā ti." 18

Buddhism moves with personal purification with the method of practising virtue or morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (pañña). By passing through these stages he gets free from rāga, dosa and moha and becomes able to understand fully egoistic and altruistic well-being. Such a person comprehends and spreads the true and proper meaning of the Buddha's message with universal appeal to maximum possible number of people.

Thus, Buddhism functions in a balanced manner. It emphasises personal purification and promotes universal benevolence — as well. As already stated earlier, the message of the Buddha are applicable to every individual, to every society and to the whole world. It is precisely universal.

"Bhavatu sabba maṅgalam."

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Dīghā vā ye mahantā vā, majjhimā rassakāṇukathulā //
Dīṭṭhā vā yeva adīṭṭhā, ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre /
Bhūtā vā sambhavesi vā, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā //
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BUDDHISM CONFUCIANISM AND TAOISM THEIR RELEVANCE IN MODERN CHINESE SOCIETY

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While discussing the impact of the three main religions Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in the society of present-day China, it is worthwhile to keep in mind the classification of Chinese history into three main periods by the Chinese historians, viz, the period prior to 1840 may be termed as the ancient period, the period from 1840 to 1919 as the Modern Period and the period from 1919 to the present as the contemporary period in Chinese history.

Buddhism from India entered a large country like China having an advanced feudal culture, different systems of government and ideological concepts. The remoulding of Chinese Buddhism took place in the social background of China's feudal society which played a determining role in giving shape to the characteristic features of Chinese-buddhism. As an alien religion, Buddhism encountered the problem of adopting itself to the traditional ideological concepts, the psychological temperaments, mode of life and customs, literary culture etc. simultaneously, from the outset, Buddhism strove hard to assimilate itself with confucian thoughts and Taoist ideas and beliefs which formed the cornerstone of Chinese culture. This sinicized form of Buddhism that emerged as a result of these consequences came to be endowed with distinct characteristics of its own.

With the beginning of Nationalist rule, there was a distinct trend for accepting modern and scientific western technology and culture for the revival of China. Buddhism being considered apart of the old culture, the attitude of the revivalists and reformists towards this religion was not very sympathetic. The present century has seen a re-awakening of Chinese Buddhism under the stimulus of the same western influences that provoked the

rest of the Chinese revolution. This has taken the form of renewed intellectual movements, reformation of the discipline and education of the monks, formation of vigorous laymen's association, resumption of contact with Japanese and South East Asian Buddhism and a resurgence of the missionary impulse. The attempted revival of Buddhism resulted from the reaction against the impact of Christianity which was one of the aspects of western dominance. After the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, various attempts were made to organize the Buddhist clergy on a national scale, to raise its cultural level by conducting Buddhist seminars, and to renew contacts with Japan and other South East Asian Buddhist countries and even with Buddhist societies in the west.

The political situation was not favourable for these measures to be implemented, as the Ching and the early Republican governments aimed at the clergy as the then target, and took harsh steps to suppress the activities to revive Buddhism. The policy of the new Chinese government toward the Buddhist clergy oscillated between political supervision and violent suppression, particularly during the mass campaigns such as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-69). Buddhist monasteries were confiscated for public use. Buddhism only existed in a truncated form limited to devotional activities and divested of all social and economic functions that the monasteries once had. Many of the clergy were converted to lay devotees and there were very few new ordinations.

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China establishes the freedom both to support and oppose religion. The Chinese Constitution provides for the freedom of religion as a basic right of its citizens. The Chinese Government respects and protects citizens religious choice, and applies the policy of religious freedom, and provides a legal guarantee for religious freedom.

The state also protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens, interfere with the educational system of, the state. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.

According to the Chinese Constitution and the laws of China, the main content of religious freedom in China runs as follows :

One, the state respects and protects freedom of religion and religious choice as a personal matter of each individual citizen. Religious believers and non-believers have equal rights and duties. In enjoying freedom of religious rights, a citizen must fulfill his or her obligation to abide by the constitution, the law, and regulations.

Two, China has a principle of separation of religion from the state and separation of religion from education. The state protects normal religious activities and religions do not interfere in state administration, jurisdiction, or education. Normal religious activities carried out in place of workshop or done at home are arranged by religious organizations and believers themselves and protected by the laws of the state. No one can interfere in these activities. The state protects the rights of religious groups and protects the rights of religious authorities who perform their service. At the same time, religious group like any other social organizations, must practice their activities within the limits of the constitution and the laws and must fulfill their obligations in accordance with the law. All individuals and organizations, including religious organizations, must defend and honour the law protect the interests of other people, maintain the solidarity of ethnic groups, and safeguard the unity of the motherland.

Three, all religions in China must follow a policy of independence, independent action, and self administration. All religious organizations and religious followers can have discussions, exchanges, and co-operative with foreign religious organizations and religious believers on an equal and friendly basis.

The Chinese Government and religious groups will not interfere in the religious affairs of foreign countries, and does not allow outsiders to interfere in the affairs of Chinese religions groups.

Since 1980 many churches, monasteries and mosques have been reopened, and religious leaders reinstated in part to establish better relationships with Buddhist, Christian and Muslim communities in other countries. There has been a limited revival of popular religion in some areas as well particularly in Tukien province, which has long had close connections with overseas Chinese. It is most likely that aspects of the Marxist regime may also be only

passing phases in a long history, and may not leave much more impact than did Christianity or the Jaipings in the preceding centuries.

Confucianism is the system of social, political, ethical and religious thought based on the teachings of Confucius and his successors. It may be defined as a socio-political ethical system concerned not so much with theological beliefs questions regarding the origin of mankind and ultimate destiny as with the living of life in the present. Its attitude belief in gods or in a meaningful afterlife is agnostic. It lacks many elements usually associated with a religion, such as a consecrated priesthood, codified creeds and dogmas, other-worldliness and even a shop of distinction between those who are and those who are not adherents. Confucianism is primarily a way of life, based on ethical teachings designed to produce a peaceful, harmonious and well ordained society in which each individual functions according to his or her capacity.

Confucius exerted great influence on Chinese philosophical development in that, first of all, he determined its outstanding characteristic, namely humanism or benevolence (jen). The principle of reciprocity is highlighted in what may be referred to as the golden rule of Confucianism. "Do not do unto others what you do not wish others to do unto you." As this golden rule has been stated in the negative, the positive principle which is used to supplement it is "In order to establish ourselves we must help others to establish themselves; in order to enlarge ourselves, we must help others, to enlarge themselves." In these balanced and harmonized aspects of the self and society, ren is expressed in terms of chung and shu or conscientiousness and altruism, which is the one thread running through Confucius' teachings, and which is the essence of the golden mean as well as the golden rule. It was the extension of this idea of ren that became the Neo-Confucian doctrine of man's forming one body with heaven, or the unity of man and nature, and it was because of the character of ren in man that later Confucianists have propounded the theory of the original good nature of man.

The Confucian conception of self-development is based upon the dignity of a person, in terms of a series of concentric circles; self, family community, society, nation, world and the cosmos. It may be added that the

move towards the unity of heaven and humanity (t'ien ren he yi) transcends secular humanism, a blatant form of antropocentrism characteristic of the intellectual ethos of the modern west. It is in the anthropocosmic spirit that we find communication between self and community, harmony between human species and nature, and mutuality between humanity and heaven, man from the Confucian viewpoint are not fundamentally different, and man being in accord with his vituous nature is man in relation to heaven, the key to understanding the Confucian religious life.

East Asian intellectuals are recently carrying on earnest investigations on the Confucian tradition and as a spiritual resource for economic development nation building, social stability and cultural identity. Professor In Wei-Ming of the Harvard University who visited Santiniketan a couple of years back on an invitation by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research to give a series of lectures on Confucianism on three modern perspective, meticulously dealt with these points in his compherensive enlightening lectures while highlighting the utility and feasibility of Confucian society in the present day world and simultaneously pointing out the limitations of the Confucian tradition. A typical Confucian society, according to him, may be characterzied by three main features an agriculture- based economy, a family-centered social system and a paternalistic government. It may be worthwhile to quote here a few lines from Professor Ju's lecture "East Asian Confucian ehthics needs to undergo a creative transformation in the light of Enlightenment values in order to serve as an effective critique of the excess individualism, pernicious competitiveness, and vicious litigiousness of the Modern West."

Taoism is the name given to a tradition of Chinese thought that has been seen as standing in opposition to Confucianism, although both have much in common. Where Confucianism excludes much from its concerns, concentrating on maintaining good order in human society through the preservation of cultural values, Taoism includes in its scope a variety of topics deliberately ignored by the Confucians and also questions the values that the Confucians promote.

During the last two imperial dynasties, the Neo-Confucianism originally developed by the masters of the Sung dynasty dominated philosophy and

guided the moral and spiritual life of most Chinese. Its hegemony was aided by the support of the imperial government, which indentified Cheng Yi (1032-1107) and Chu Hsi (1130-1200) Rationalist School with the orthodox transmission of the Confucian Way, and set Chu Hsi's own commentaries on the Four Books and the Five Classics as texts for the imperial civil services examinations.

During China's first cultural revolution, the May Fourth Movement, it appeared that the future could only belong to one of the two anti-traditional currents then dominating the intellectual debate: liberalism and pragmatism on the one hand or the more radical ideas of Marxism and anarchism on the other. Most participants in these events saw confucianism as not merely pernicious, but irrelevant, and the portions of the tradition were altogether on the defensive. Half a century later, the influence of pre-modern Chinese thought was both pervasive and deep, and it would not be an exaggeration to assert that the most significant and forceful promoter of traditional values within the People's Republic of China was none other than Mao Tse-Tung. After Mao's death in September 1976, ideas and values of foreign origin became once again more influential than they had been since the 1930s, but at the same time the prestige of Chinese culture remained high.

While some of the Marxist controversies of the 1950s continued to be pursued in the following decades, most Chinese philosophers were more interested in devising new answers to new problems. Indeed the party leadership, headed by the YaoPang and then by Chao TseYang, appeared to encourage the view that Marxism could only maintain its vitality if it was developed and adapted, not dogmatically reasserted. At the same time, the proclaimed goal was Chinese - style modernization, and this was taken to include these preservation and assimilation of elements in the heritage of old China (including Chinese philosophy) judged to be still of value today. Before the 4 June massacre (T'ien An Men Incident) of 1989, however, the conciousness at least of the urban population of New China had been raised to a degree which makes it extremely unlikely that the present reactionary phase can long endure.



RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY

Dr. Prabhakar Mishra

Nava Nalanda Mahavihaara, Nalanda

The modern society means the society formed by men and women spread throughout the world. In this sense one is tempted to speak of societies in place of the singular society. Such an organization knows no limitation of its own. Such a society takes all men and women of the world in its own lap. Keeping in view such a huge social organization, the question regarding the relevancy¹ of Buddhism² and other Religions³ may be asked. But such a type of question may be answered either affirmatively or negatively. The person answering the questions affirmatively will produce his own standpoint with sound arguments while the person answering the question negatively will clarify his standpoint by producing his arguments in disfavour of the relevancy of Buddhism and other Religions. But the writer of the present paper has the arguments in favour of the relevancy of Buddhism and other Religions in modern society.

Here, at first, one has to take care of the fact that Buddhism like any other religion of the world is a religion. Though there is no unanimity in "Buddhism" being a religion. There are scholars of repute who refuse in calling Buddhism as a religion. But let that go. The writer of the present paper has reasons in disbelieving such opinions. And it is taken for granted that Buddhism is a religion. Now taking all religions including Buddhism have relevancy in the modern society.

But the pertinent question arises regarding the urgency of the religions for the existing societies of the world.

In this connection it may be said that the religions of the world are relevant for the modern society in a variety of ways which may be enumerated.

Even in the present Computer Age different religions of the world have relevancy. This statement may raise some controversy but who can deny the fact. This becomes amply clear when we concentrate on one sentence of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who observes : "The need for religion, for a system of thought, for devotion to a cause which will give our fragile and fugitive existence significance and value does not require much elaborate argument." This one sentence removes the curtain from the eyes of those who are either overwhelmed with the development of science and technology or donot have faith in any religion. The religion is healthy and progressive till it responds challenges but the same declines with the cessation of the factors of challenges confronting it.

The Computer Age is not ready to accept incredible dogma. But the Computer Age has not the unique status for there is the reign of humanism in it. Only that type of religion appeals to the modern mind which is sensitive to human ills and social crimes. Only that religion prevails which foster unity, understanding and coherence.

It is hundred percent mistake to cherish the idea that science is opposed to religion. Religions consider the cosmos objectively. In this way they follow the scientific method. A few example from the philosophical text may clarify the standpoint quite clearly. The very first sentence of Brahma Sutra states "Athāto brahmaji jñāsa" which means "the desire to know Brahman" has been followed by "Janmodyasya yatah" which means that Brahman is that from which the origin of this universe proceeds. When we concentrate on these two aphorisms, then, we find a steady ascent from inorganic to organic, from organic to the sentiment and sentiment is completed in the rational life which has to develop into the spiritual fellowship. This intends to attain the city of God. In this way earth is but the ground of lives and spirit. At this point Earth and Heaven come closer.

With the studies of spirit of science we come to know that the ultimate begining is matter. Men split atom. But the human mind splitting atom in certainly superior to atom. The presence of spirit in man is proved by the achievements of science. The reality of underlying spirit is proved in the nature of the cosmic evolution.

Religion becomes refined with the spirit of science because religions remain embedded in experience. The different religions of the world have suggested to remove ignorance by wisdom. But here wisdom never means textual. The man having the knowledge of text is known as the *mantravit* and not *Ātmavit*. It has rightly been observed "The self cannot be attained by instruction nor by intellectual power nor through much learning".⁵ Religion is but spiritual adventure and practice. It is fulfilment of man's life and an experience. For this a change of consciousness and understanding is required.

Man has to evolve for which the conscious effort is required. Man is an incomplete being. He has to assume higher and higher status with his own conscious effort.

The teaching of Christianity clarifies that it does not take place by outer life but by inner contemplation. In order to achieve this goal one has been advised to act for what is good in itself. One has to undergo inner growth, i.e., growth in wisdom and nature so that one might attain heaven. For this one has to take help of meditation and self control through prayer and fasting. John Loys stress on salvation through moral life where as Jesus admonishes to become new. The Ephesians speaks of "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead." Christianity consists in awakening from sleep through the light shed by the inner wisdom.

The highest attainable state by man is the Kingdom of Heaven which is not outside but within us.⁶ He has set eternity in the heart of man.⁷ He is between the visible and invisible worlds. One has to abstract from the outer to get at the inner experience. In the words of Boehme one can perceive everything in a new relation "if we can stand still from self thinking and self willing and stop the wheel of imaginations and the senses. "It has rightly been observed by Karl Barth : "Men suffer, because bearing within them an invisible, they find this unobservable inner world met by the tangible, foreign, other outer world, desperately visible, dislocated, its fragments jostling one another, yet mightily powerful and strangely menacing and hostile."⁸

The great scriptures of the world are the treasures for mankind. The truth lying in them cannot be demonstrated but the evidence of truth lies in man's experience. This is evident with the words of Lord Buddha when he says that his words should be accepted only when they have been properly examined. The different religions of the world advises us to look upon life as an opportunity for self-realizations. There is the need of incessant strive for gaining the immortality. God is the universal reality which brings about universal brotherhood for the creation. Thus, Religion is the binding force which deepens the solidarity of human society but Reality is longer than any system of theology. The religions of the world admonish respect for other ways of life. The early Christianity was humanistic and tolerant.

The Islamic scripture The Quran speaks "not to revile those whom other worship besides Allāh lest they, out of spite, revile Allāh is their ignorance."¹⁰ The Quran further speaks, "we believe in God and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ismail, Issac, Jacob and the tribes, and that given Moses and Jesus and that given to athon Apostle, from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them, for we bow to Allāh."¹¹ The following quotation from the Quran establishes harmony of the religion. According to Quran, "The same religion has he established for you as that which he enjoined on Noah, which we have sent by inspiration to thee. And that which we enjoined in Abraham Moses and Jesus, namely that you should remain steadfast in religion and make no division there in."¹² Now it is clear that sincerity in the intention and earnestness in the effort lead one to the Supreme. In this way we are the members of one invisible church. Here it becomes essential to quote from Father of Nation who said "I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. A friendly study of the world's religion is a sacred duty." A new soul comes into being with the mutual fertility of different religions.

After having taken into consideration the relevancy of religions in general the writer of the present paper proceeds to discuss the relevancy of Buddhism in particular.

The Buddha was remarkable teacher who worked upon the inheritance and developed novel standpoints. His religion is known as "Buddhism" which has attracted the attention of men and women of the world. This shows that "Buddha religion" is very much relevant for the modern society of the world. There are many arguments which propound that "Buddhism" as a religion is the need of the world.

The sight of a sramana, i.e., ascetic with healthy body and cheerful mind immensely impressed the Buddha from which he concluded that the pursuit of religion is the only goal worthy of a man which makes man independent of temporary trial and pleasures of the world.

With the studies of the theravāda Buddhism it comes to light that the Buddha is a man and a teacher. As a man he sets an example of an ideal man and as a teacher he sets an example of a noble teacher. With these two standpoints the religion of the Buddha becomes relevant for the suffering humanity of the world. There is an another side of the Buddha's life in which he has concern with the sorrows of man "*bahu-jana-sukhāya* and *bahu-jana hitāya*. This is the sum and substance of the latter buddhism.

Like all other religions buddhism believes in change of man's nature which has been explained with reference to the conception of the second birth '*dvitiyam janma*'. "To effect this change, to be reborn, to be awakened is the goal of all religions as of Buddhism.

The Buddhist religion is relevant in the modern society for fearlessness, diseaselessness, anxietylessness etc. The following quotation clarifies this point quite clearly. "But I deem the highest goal of a man to be the stage in which there is neither old-age, nor fear, nor disease, nor birth, nor death, nor anxieties and in which there is no continuous renewal of activity."¹³

With the studies of literature on Theravāda Buddhism we come to know that the spiritual realization is a growth from within. This is a great lesson for the suffering humanity and hence Buddhist religion is relevant in the modern society. Man has control over his future. The future can be worked

out. He can become an Arahāt and attain the highest goal of life technically known as the Nirvāṇa. The propounder of the religion was an ardent interpreter of the strenuous life. His aim was to conquer time, overcome saṃsāra by following the moral path which culminates into perfection.

The Buddha conceded the reality of a changeable self for the self is something that can be built with the help of good thoughts and deeds. The Karma relates the worldly objects and nirvana assumes inward freedom. The man can stand out of the existential province. The 'I' is conditionless while perception, feeling etc. are all impermanent. With the knowledge of impermanency men becomes free from them. The ego is not the only content of self but there is another side of it too. The another side of the self is the inward principle.

The *Prajñā and Karuṇā* are the two great topics of lesson preached by the Lord for the people. It was the object of the Buddha to bring about a reformation in the religious practices and to return to the fundamental principles. "The Buddha aimed at the development of a new type of free man, free from prejudices intent on working out his own future, with one's own light *atta-dipa*. His humanism crossed social and national barriers."¹⁴ Buddhism is internationalism. The enemies are within us and it is our pious duty to drive them out.

Now, the relevancy of religions in general and Buddhism in particular stands before us. In the discussion regarding the indispensability of religion for the modern society, it has been seen that all religions are relevant. In no case are they out of place. But they are sometimes opium and some times dangerous when they are not properly understood. In the modern society, it is the need of the hour that they should be properly understood and well practised. In such a case they will bear fruit hundred fold where as in the case when they are not well understood and not well practised, will bring about change in the society.

Now, so far as the relevancy of "Buddha-dharma" is concerned it has to be born in mind that the religion is well-planned and suited to the modern society of the whole world. With the deeper studies of the religion we come to know that it is the breakers of the fetters who block the path of the development of human society. The Buddha Dharma is against the permanency

of soul. It affirms that soul is to be constructed with constant practices. This religion is also against the doctrine of God as the generator, operator and destructor. There is no such God. Man is the maker of his own fate. The door is quite open for him. Man is destined to be Arhat, Paccekabuddha, Bodhisattva and Buddha. But everything is with himself. If he wants he can attain any one of four status but if he does not and needs not then he can worsen his status and may go on existing as he is.

REFERENCES AND FOOT NOTES

1. Pertinence.
2. A world religion which preaches relief from suffering through the abnegation of desire and the achievement or the state of "supreme enlightenment" known as *Nirvāna*.
... *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Progress Publishers, p.51.
3. A specific form of social consciousness whose characteristic feature is a fantastic reflection in people's minds of eternal forces dominating over them, a reflection in which centrally forces assume unearthly forms.
... *Ibid*; p. 357.
4. Modern Society means Associations of persons.
5. *Nāyamātmā prevacenena labhyo na medhyā, nebahunā śrutena Katha Upanisad*, I, 2.33.
6. John, III, 3.
7. *Ecclesiastics*, III, II.
8. *Commentary on Romans*, p.306.
9. *Parikṣya bhikṣvo grāhyam madevaco na tu gaurvāt*.
10. VI, 108
11. II, 136
12. XLII, 13
13. Asvaghosa : *Buddhacarita*, XI, 59
14. *Buddhism* - by Dr. Radhakrishnan.

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RELEVANCE OF RATNAKŪṬA SŪTRA (DKON-BRTSEGS) AND SUTTANTA IN MODERN SOCIETY

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In the modern society Buddhism has a new turn as it has been popular among a large section of world population. In India Buddhism has been revived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Four important personalities have mainly contributed to the revival of Buddhism in India. They are :

1. Ven. Kripāsaran Mahāsthavira
2. ✓ Anāgārika Dharmapāla
3. ✓ Dharmānanda Kosambi
4. ✓ Babasaheb Ambedkar

Buddhism in modern society had developed in two ways :

- (i) Spread of the Buddhist thought in which academicians have played a key role.
- (ii) Dissemination Buddhism all over the globe by the Buddhists.

The Ratnakūṭa Sūtra is, however, important to the Buddhists belonging to all sections. Because the Ratnakūṭa Sūtra deals with the personalities of the Śākyamuni in his physical endiment (Nirmānakāya, Tib : Sprul-Sku) and his transcendental embodiment (Dharmakāya, Tib : Chos-sku). Two types of approaches of Buddhist thoughts, viz. Srāvakayāna (Hīnayāna) and the Bodhisatvayāna (Mahāyāna) become unified in the Ratnakūṭa Sūtra which is a collection of the Pariprcchā Sūtra and Kāyavyūha texts, such as, the Physical body (Nirmāṇa-Kāya, Tib. prul-sku), celestial bodys' Smbhogakaya, Tib lons spyod sku, and the transcendental

body (Darmakāya, Tib, chos sku). Some of these are noted below :

A. Pariprcchā Texts :

1. Tib : 'Phags-Pa yab dan sres majal ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen Po'i mdo. (Na - 80 b : 5-336 b : 3)¹
 Sans : Ārya pitāputra samāgama nāma Mahāyāna Sūtra.
 Chinese : Phu Sa-kien-shin-hwui [NJ. No. 23 (16)]
 Japanese : Bo-sat Sukenjitsue (Toh. 60)
2. Tib : 'Phags pa gan pos-zhus pa zhes bya ba theg-pa chen Po'i mdo. (336 b : 3-429 b : 4)
 Sans : Ārya purṇa pariprcchā nāma Mahāyāna Sūtra.
 Chinese : Fu-leu-nā-hwui. [NJ No. 23/17]
 Japanese : Furonae. Toh. 61
3. Tib : 'Phags-pa-yul Khor skyoñ gis zhus-pa zhes bya-theg pa chen Po'i mdo (429 b : 4-478 a : 4)²
 Sans : Ārya Rāstrapāla pariprcchā nāma Mahāyāna Sūtra.
 Chinese : Hu-Kwo-phi-sā-hwui (NJ. 23 (18)
 Japanese - Gokokubosatsue (Toh. 62)
4. 'Phags-pa' dul ba rnam par gtan la dbab-pa ne bar khor gyis-zhus pa zhes bya ba theg-pa-chen Po'i mdo (Ca = 220 a: 1-244 a:2)³
 Sans : Ārya Vinaya-viniścaya upāli pariprcchā nāma Mahāyāna Sūtra.
 Chinese : Yin-bo-li-hwui (NJ. 23/24)
 Japanese -: Upric (Toh. 68)
5. Tib : 'Phags-pa lag-bzañs kyis-zhus pa zhes bya-pa theg pa chen Po'i mdo (Ca-277 B : 5-316 b : 3)
 Sans : Ārya Subāhu pariprcchā nāma mahāyāna sūtra.
 Chinese : Shān-phi-phi-sā hwui (NJ 23/26)
 Japanese : Zembibosatsue (Toh. 70)

6. Tib : 'Phags-pa-khyim bdag dpal sbyin gyis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen Po'i mdo (Ca-335 b : 6-350 b : 5)⁴
 Sans : Ārya viradatta grhapati pariprcchā nāma mahāyāna sūtra.
 Chinese - Khin-Sheu-Khañ-Kö-hwui - NJ. 23/28
 Japanese : Gonjuchojae (Toh. 72)
7. Tib : 'Phags-pa-bu-mo-blo-gros bzhan mos zhus-pa-zhes bya-ba theg pa chen Poi mdo. (Ca - 368 a : 6 - 377 b : 1)⁵
 Sans : Ārya-sumati dārikā pariprcchā nāma mahāyāna sūtra.
 Chinese : Miao-hwui-thuñ-nü-hwui, (NJ 23/30)
 Japanese : Myoedonye (Toh. 74)
- B. There are some texts in the Ratnakūta Sūtra, which deal with the transcendental embodiment of the Buddha. In this regard the following vyūha (bkod-pa) texts deserve mention :
 1. Tib : 'Phags - pa 'od dpag med kyi bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen Po'i mdo. (Ka = 394 a : 7-448 a : 5)⁶
 Sans : Ārya Amitābha vyūha nāma mahāyāna Sūtra.
 Chinese : Wu-liān - Sheu-Zu-lāi-hwui (23/5)
 Japanese : Kammuryōjubut Sukyō (Toh. 49)
 2. Tib : 'Phags pa de bzhin gśegs pa mi khrugs pa'i bkod pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen Po'i mdo (Kha = 1 a:1-112 a:2)⁷
 Sans : Ārya Aksobha Tathāgata vyūha nāma mahāyāna Sūtra.
 Chinese : Pu-tuñ-zu-lāi-hwui. NJ. 28, 23 (6)
 Japanese : Fudōnyoraie. (Toh. 50)
- C Nirdeśa Texts (bstan-pa)
 1. Tib : 'Phags pa-chos-kyi-dbyiñ-khi-rañ bshin dbyer-med-par-bastan-pa-zhes bya-ba-theg-pa chen-Po'i mdo (Kha-219b : 1-233 a:4)
 Sans : Ārya-dhārma dhatu-prakṛti asaṁbheda-nirdeśa-pāma-mahāyāna Sūtra.

Chinese : Fa-kie-thi-sin-wu-tan-pieh-hwui (NJ 23/8)

Japanese : Hokaitaisho mufum betsue (Toh. 52)

2. Tib : 'Phags-pa-go-cha'i bkod-pa bstan-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa
chen Po'i mdo (Kha - 112 a:2 - 219 b:1)

Sans : Ārya Varma-vyūha nirdeśa-nāma Mahāyāna Sūtra.

Chinese : Pei-kia-kwān-yen-hwui. (NJ 23/7)

Japanese : Hikā Shōgone (Toh. 51)

A Buddhist practitioner contemplates the embodiments of Śākyamuni in the realm of ethereal rays with joyous state (Sambhoga-Kāya), while the transcendental embodiment (Dharmakaya, Tib Chos-Skyu) is all pervading and all imminent.

In Pali there are several terms in the Suttanta texts in praise of Buddha e.g. Sammāsambuddha,⁸ etc. Those Suttanta texts mention the excellence of Buddha in avowing the transcendence with bala and vasita and other Bodhipakkiya dhammas.

Evidently, Buddha's eminence is worshipped for his transcendental merits; and that can make Buddha as the superiormost among all beings. He is named by different names.⁹ Some of the attributes are given below :

Pāli/Sanskrit	Tibetan	English
Sammāsambuddha ¹⁰	Yan-dag-par-rjogs	The most accomplished
Vijjācarana ¹¹	rig-pa dan zhabs-su- ldan pa	accomplished in science & practice
lokavidu ¹²	jig-rten-mkhyen-pa	World knowing
Anutara-purisa-damma- sarathi ¹³	Skyes-by' dul-ba'i kha-lo sgyur-ba bla	the supreme director of men
Jina ¹⁴	rgyal-ba	Victorions or triumphant
Sugata etc.		

II

In the modern soceity these meritorious qualities have been invoked with praise and adomonitions. In that respect the scenerio of Buddhism continues for more than last two thousand five hundred years in different countries of Asia. For the last few centuries the inhabitants of Europe, Australia and Africa avowedly involve in the Buddha-Worship and His teachings. In spite of the upheaval of the history of mankind Buddhism thus survives. From the early days uptill not the first step of adoration of Buddha is shown in the popular formula :

Namo Tasso Bhagavota Arahata Sammāsambuddhassa

In this connection six-fold anusmṛiti (pali anussati) are important to mention. The six-fold anussati is as follows :

*Buddhānussati, Dhammānussati,
Samghānussati, Sīlānussati,
Tyāgānussati and Devatānusati.*¹⁵

The Ratnakūta Sūtra lays much emphasis is on **Buddhānusmṛti** and **Dharmānusmṛti**.

Buddhānusmṛiti in early Buddhist Scripture has four meanings :¹⁶

1. Contemplation on the attributes of Buddha (**Buddhābhavana**)
2. Hearing of the name of Buddha (**Buddha Sruti**)
3. Repeatation of the name of Buddha (**Mantra/Buddha-Japa**)
4. Meditation as the embodiment by Buddha (**Buddh-dhyava**)

The **Buddhanusmṛiti** literally suggests re-collection of Buddha and **Dharmanusmṛiti** to the re-collection of the Dharma. The **Dharmanusmṛiti** have specific significance in the **Ratnakūta Sūtras**. The Doctrine of impermanance of the phenomenal world (**Samvṛtika**) as enunciated by the Buddhas, obiviously the **Sanskṛita Dharma** (constituted phenomenon) and **Asaṅskṛta Dharma** (unconstituted phenomenon) have been elaborated in the **paripṛccha** texts enumerated above.

In this connection Nāgārjuna describes the characteristics of the Buddha and the Dharma in eight-fold negative term in his *Mūlāmadhyamaka-Kārikā*¹⁷ as follows :

*Anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāśvatam
anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam
Yah pratityasamutpādam prapañcopaśamam sivam
Desayāmāna sambuddhastam bande badatam varam*

The Ratnakūta Sūtras in depiction of the transcendental nature (parinispanasvabhāva) of the Buddhas in Dharmakāya refers to the excellence of the transcendental embodiment. The glory of the Buddha has therefore been regarded as unlimited, omniscient and sarvajña who has a vision all over the six worlds. The Ratnakūta Sūtras devote to those praise which glorified the excellence of Buddha above the divine beings.

The Buddha worship in the society has taken a new turn to visualise his illumination through esoteric exercise. The Ratnakūta Sutra as its meaning goes is the highest peak (bṛhatspṛṣṭh) of a mountain covered with rare (dīptam) jewels. In this context it can be said that here 'Jewel' (ratna) or ratna in pāli and rayna or ladana in prakṛt suggests the spiritual quality that a ratnapuṣṭa (Tib : rinpo-che'i gan zag) acquires. The Astasāhasrika Prajñāpāramitā give the simile of cintamani (Tib : tsin ta mani) i.e. wishing Jewels which is priceless as a protection from evil. It eliminates the darkness of the night and warms the cold spots on earth. Endowed with the qualities of cintamani one acquires vision to remove the affections of the mind. In respect of the Buddhas the ratnakūta suggests the excellence of Dhamadhātu with reference to śūnyatā and upāyakauśala. The Ratnakūta sūtras therefore Dharmaparyāya texts in which the śūnyatā and upāyakauśala of the Buddhas in three spheres of embodiment in relation to three kinds of nature, that is, Parikalpita (thought constructed) paratantra (dependent) and pariniṣpanna (fully accomplished or transcendental) assimilates. The Ratnakuta texts are therefore codified in the *kanjur* as the Buddha-vaccana in enumerating the Dharma.

III

Besides the nature of the Buddha, the Dharma, the worship of the Buddha or the symbols are prevalent since the early stages of Buddhism, The Buddha is therefore worshipped in various ways, e.g. in the forms of pair of foot prints, the Dharma-cakram, the Triratna, symbols and in the forms of stupa etc. Mention may be made here that the conception of caityas were pre-buddhistic : It can be traced in megalithic culture.¹⁸ In the course of time the practice of worshipping caitya and its erection at four and finally eight holy places was popularised. For that purpose a scriptures entitled "Astamahāsthāna caitya stotra" was composed and the "Pa ta lin t'a ming hao chin" is the chinese version to this text. The Tibetan version of this text¹⁵ is (Gnas-chen-po-brgyad-kyi-mehod-rten-la-bstod-pa) referred to in the Tohoku catalogue of No. 1132. Even at present days, the practice of Worshipping the foot prints of Buddha left influence in Japan, as in the case of those of the Yakushiji Temple at Nara.

The modern societies are in a struggle of identity and egoistic venture to supercede others. In the social context such egoistic aspirations leads us to anarchism and oligarchy by the name of collective responsibility. Buddha worship in contrast teaches us how to surrender, to be humble, to submit before him who is previous Jewel (rana pudgala) and above where the merits are attainable by the individual which are heaped to be effulgent.

In the Buddhist art the hallow behind the image of Buddha speaks about the ethereal effulgence that the Buddha holds. Here Buddha is not a particular but the universal. The concept of thousand Buddhas glorifies the eminence of the Buddha as the Great Accomplished (Mahāsampanna-Tib. rdzogs-chen). The Ratnakūta Sūtras which are lost in Sanskrit in most cases becomes a path-finder in respect of the persons of modern world who wants celibacy and self-purification.

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14. Takakusu, J.cd. Samantapasādikā : Buddha ghasa's commentary on the *Vinaya Pitaka* (Vin.), vol. I.P-8 mādisa ve jina honti ye'paṭṭa āsavakkhayaṃ sita - me pāpakā dhama tas may am upako Jino.
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ABBREVIATIONS

- Tib = Tibetan Manuscripts of West-Tibetan collection (= Asiatic Society of Kanjur. Vols. Ka = eha.
- Sans. = Sanskrit Name of the Text.

Chin. - Chinese name.

Nj. No. = (BUNYIU Nanjio compiled)
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Jap = Japanese name

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ROLE OF EARLY MONASTIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN BUDDHIST SYSTEM OF EDUCATION AND MODERN SOCIETY

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Introduction : Education is the process of development of latent qualities of an individual, or it is the function of drawing out all the best capacities of man which will enable him to fulfil his objectives. In its wider sense education is self-culture and self-improvement and the process will go on to the end of one's life. The purpose of education is development of faculties of human beings in desired and required directions. It sharpens the intellect, improves the grasping power and develops the faculty of discrimination, and true education refines and strengthens the moral fibres and removes the passions and prejudices from one's mind. It is a source of illumination and power, which transforms and ennobles the one's nature by the progressive and harmonious development of mental, intellectual and spiritual faculties.¹

This development takes place through a continuous reconstruction of practical experiences in life by interlinking and transmission of knowledge and understanding of society. The function of education today as envisaged takes place to some extent in a controlled environment called educational institutions. In Europe, however, this function was performed by the Church in earlier days. But in India there were various and diverse religious orders and institutions were prevalent in the hoary past. These religious organisations were responsible in formulating their own educational system in ancient India. The most ancient system was the Brahmanical system of education, wherein the youngsters (disciples) were trained for life through the Ashramas (the Gurugriha) and where the students (or group of disciples) are required to stay with the teacher or Guru and the teacher helped his disciples (sishtya) to learn and to acquire knowledge. On the other hand, Buddhist education and

learning developed centering round the monasteries and the tradition of the Buddhist system had attained the monastic character and functioned within the framework of monastic life.²

2. Buddhist Education : As already stated Buddhist education and learning centered round monasteries since the Buddhist system of education did not offer any educational opportunities apart from independently of its monasteries. Teaching of both religious and secular subjects were imparted and taught by the monks and it was the monk who carried on all the educational activities in the monastery. In fact, they were really the only custodians and torch-bearers of the Buddhist education.

It may be mentioned that the monasteries that were developed in the early stage of the spiritual training of monks gradually changed into centres of learning. Later on, they transformed into large monastic universities with thousands of teachers and students in the congregation, which were famous all over Asia and attracted students from various parts of the continent. Many distinguished scholars from distant foreign countries used to come and stay there to study the various subjects both Buddhistic and Brahmanical. Of them the University of Nalanda attracts the attention most and Nalanda played a very conspicuous role in the development of the Buddhist system of education. Moreover, there were other universities like Valabhai, Vikramsila, Jagaddala and Odantapuri and the like which represented as large educational federation deserve mention. This shows that the monks had the monopoly of learning and carried on all the educational and cultural activities in the monasteries.³

The history of the Buddhist system of education is really the history of the Buddhist Order or Samgha. "The history of Buddhist education" observer Dr. S.Dutt, "really forms one aspect of the history of Buddhist monachism itself. It reflects in its process the inner intellectual life of the monasteries - the gradual and progressive enrichment of this life, its broadening and liberalizing effect over the course of the centuries, its unfolding and expansion. Starting as a system of training for a monk, it expands its scope and purpose under the impact of new intellectual needs and interests, finds new mental horizons, until the monastery becomes not just a place for cloistered

meditation, but a seat of culture and learning."⁴ These characteristics of Buddhist system were reflected in all the activities of the monastic universities developed later-day.

3. Monastic universities :

3.1 Nalanda : Nalanda flourished not merely as a monastery, but was regarded as an ancient seat and seminary of higher learning, or put in modern terms as an institution of University grade. This monastic establishment with its splendid library probably flourished during 450 A.D. to 1100 A.D.⁵ About fifty miles south-east of Patna, Nalanda arose steadily as a famous centre of monastic learning. Hiuen-Tsang records, "in the establishment were some thousand brethren, all men of great learning and ability, several hundreds being highly esteemed and famous; the brethren were very strict in observing the precepts and regulations of their order; learning and discussing they found the day too short, day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection. Hence foreign students came to the establishment to put an end to their doubts and then became celebrated, and those who stole the name (of Nalanda) were all treated with respect wherever they went."⁶

The monastic establishment though belonged to the Mahayana school of Buddhist, and works of the famous Mahayana scholars like Nāgārjuna, VĀsubandhu, Asaṅga and Dharmakīrti have been specially studied, but the works of the rival school Hinayāna one were also taught.⁷ The courses of study offered by the Nalanda University covered a wide range, almost the universe of knowledge then available. They were drawn from the different fields of study, Brahmanical and Buddhist, sacred and secular, philosophical and practical, sciences and arts.⁸ The students at Nalanda as stated in the 'Life', "all study the Great Vehicle and also the works belonging to the eighteen sects, and not only so, but even ordinary works, such as, the Vedas and other books, the Netuvidya, Sabdaviya, the Chikitsāvidyā, the works of Magic or Atharvaveda, the Sāmkhya; besides these, they thoroughly investigate the 'miscellaneous works'.⁹ Hiuen-Tsang himself studied the Yoga-sāstra, followed by other subjects like Nyāya, Hetuvidyā, Sabdavidya and the like, and also the books of the Brahmanas including philological, Philosophi-

cal, astronomical subjects, and the Sanskrit grammar of Panini. Further he mentioned that he studied the Yoga philosophy under the head of that institution, Silabhadra, for five years or more. With its full complement of schools of studies, lecture-halls, libraries, regulations for admission and attendance at lectures, conduct and discipline, and a complete system of academic administration, it was a full-fledged monastic university of immense size. Its magnitude can be judged from his notes that the number of teachers was 1500 and of learners 10,000, though the figure seems to have come down later, in I-tsing's time to a little over 3000. It is said that as many as one hundred chairs or pulpits were daily arranged for the lectures and discussions.¹¹

I-tsing noted in his itinerary that Sanskrit Grammar was always one of the basic studies of a scholar and he described how the study of grammar was conducted in a systematic way. He mentioned that a scholar was required to study the following grammatical works : Panini's *Sutras*, *Dhatupatha*, *Astadhatu*, *Kasikavritti* Bhartrihari's *Sastra*, *Vakyapadiya* and *Vedavritti* etc. The travelogue further added that young scholars devote themselves to logic (*Hetuvidya*) and metaphysics (*Abhidharmakosa*) and the priests learn besides all the Vinaya works and investigate the sutras and sastras as well.¹² Thus, Nalanda became the centre of higher learning in all its branches.

Moreover, Nalanda was also famous for its high standard of piety and scholarship. Amongst them were "Dharmapala and Chandrapala, who gave a fragrance to the Buddha's teachings, Gunamati and Sthiramati of excellent reputation among contemporaries, Prabhamitra of clear argument, Jinamitra of elevated conversation, Jnanachandra of model character and perspicacious intellect and, Silabhadra, whose perfect excellence was buried in obscurity."¹³

It must be noted that the fame of Nalanda was so widespread that students from all parts of India and also from distant foreign countries came to flock together in the portals of the University, Fa-Hien, Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing were not the Chinese scholars who came to Nalanda, but several foreign scholars from distant countries like China, Korea, Tibet and Tokhara had visited Nalanda and spent considerable time there in studying and copying manuscripts.¹⁴

3.2 Nalanda university library : "The Nalanda authorities had realised that a monastery without a library was like a castle without an armoury".¹⁵ So an elaborate scheme was adopted for a wellplanned and splendid library within the University area to meet the varied demands of numerous teachers, scholars and thousands of pupils, who had devoted themselves to the study of different branches of knowledge.¹⁶ I-tsing, the Chinese scholar stayed for his studies at Nalanda for the long period of ten years (A.D. 675-685) during which he got copied and collected there some 400 Sanskrit texts amount to 5000,000 slokas.¹⁷ It is evident from this record that the Nalanda monastery was well-equipped with a library of immense collection-both Buddhistic and non-Buddhistic. According to his observation when a Buddhist monk expired at Nalanda, his collection comprising sacred books and manuscripts was added to the library and other properties including non-Buddhistic works were disposed of. This record showed how gradually through peaceful acquisition of dead one's precious collections, the university library ultimately transformed into a grand store-house of invaluable manuscripts.¹⁸

Detailed particulars relating to the magnificent library of the monastery of Nalanda can be gleaned from the Tibetan sources. According to these accounts the university library was situated in a special area known as the Dharmaganja (Mart of Religion or Piety Mart). It consisted of three monumental edifices called Ratnasagara (Ocean of Jewels), Ratnadadhi (Sea of Jewels) and Ratna-ranjaka (Jewel adorned). Among them Ratnasagara was a nine-storied building,¹⁹ which was specialised for the collection of rare and sacred works like Prajnaparamitasutra and Tantrika books like Samajaguhya and others.²⁰ But it is sad to note that this magnificent library with its splendid collections which enriched higher education with all its diversities and embellishments and proved to be significant partner in the development of scholarship throughout the world according to Tibetan legends perished in flames kindled by an incendiary, a Turuska (Turk).

3.3. Valabhi : The most pre-eminent monastery in western India was Valabhi, near modern Wala in Kathiawar, flourished as an important centre of monastic learning in ancient India. Epigraphic records showed that the

monastery endowed with a big library was patronised by the royal personalities and was founded²¹ by Gunamati and Sthiramati, two disciples of VAsubandhu. Hiuen-Tsang noticed that there were about a hundred Buddhist monasteries at Valabhi with about six thousand priests.²² I-tsing records that Nalanda and Valabhi were the two places in India where scholars used to reside for two or three years to complete their education.²³ Valabhi, like Nalanda, also attracted students from all parts of India to hold discussions of all 'possible and impossible doctrines'. Like Nalanda, Valabhi was also famous for both Buddhistic and non-Buddhistic learning and the monastic establishment was famous for its catholicity and intellectual freedom.²⁴

The Maitraka kings, who were ruling there during the period 480 to 775 A.D., were great patrons of learning. They used to give direct grants for the purpose of meeting the general expenditure of monastery as also for strengthening its library through acquisition of books, as is evident from 'Saddharmasya pustakopacayaratham' in the grant of Guhasena 1, date 559 A.D.²⁵ The addition of this item indicates that by Guhasena's time the monasteries were either organised or were in the process of organisation as seat of study and learning and were building up libraries.²⁶ It was observed by both Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing that most of the monks of Valabhi were specialised in Hinayana Buddhism as opposed to Nalanda. The University with its grand library being dated from 475 to 12th century catered to the needs of the innumerable scholars who made the best use of this monastic university library and its splendid collections.

3.4. Vikramsila : If Nalanda fulfilled the dictum of Newman that a University is a place of learning implying the assemblage of strangers from various places in one spot, the royal University of Vikramsila satisfied the dictum of Carlyle that a true university is a collection of books.²⁷ A grand and magnificent library formed an important adjunct to this university which was acknowledged to one of the principal seats of Buddhist learning and culture and enjoyed its reputation all over the ancient India and even beyond the boundaries of the country. It was later contemporary of Nalanda monastery, being established by Dharmapala, the then illustrious Pala king of Bengal,²⁸

and became eminent during the periods of the decadence of the Nalanda monastery. It was situated on a hill on the south and right bank of the Ganges in the north of Magadha proper.²⁹

The University flourished in the days of Tantric Buddhism when occult sciences and magic had become favourite subjects of study.³⁰ To tantra was given the prominence in the production of numerous books at Vikramasila under the well-patronage of learned monks.³¹ This monastic establishment is said to have included 108 temples and six colleges and was a centre not only of Tantric studies, but also of Logic and Grammar.³² With its own publications this monastic university which was located according to Cunningham in the modern village Silao near Baragoan in Bihar in course of time acquired a rich and invaluable collections of books. Dr. S.C. Vidyabhusan indentified it with Sultanganj in Bhagalpur District, and N.L. De with Patharghata hill near Colgong in Bhagalpur District.³³ It also included many rare works on Grammar, Metaphysics and Logic for the teaching of which this university became renowned. The reputed teachers and pupils of this university also occupied themselves with the task of copying manuscripts. One of these manuscripts entitled "Asta-Sahasrika Prajnaparamita" is now to be found in the British Museum copied in the region of Gopala Deva, the Second.³⁴ Among the reputed scholars and famous teachers of Vikramasila university, the following, viz. Jnanapada, Vairochana, Jetari, Prajnakaramati, Ratnakara, Ratnavajra, Vagisvara, Dipankara, Abhayakaragupta, Ratnakirti, Manjusri, and Dharmakirti deserved mention.

The Academic Council of the Vikramasila was incharge of libraries, which in addition to storing books undertook also the work of copying. The library also took various steps to reconstruct the worn and torn out manuscripts and made liberal provision in order to meet the varied requirements of target groups and the outside public, particularly of Tibet, for copies of books from its stocks. A good number of Sanskrit works were translated into Tibetan and prepared at Vikramasila by Tibetan and Indian scholars. Dipankara Srijnan, himself translated into Tibetan a bulk of his own works with the help of his associate learned monk Viryasimha at Vikramasila.³⁵ The copying work was made largely by the monk teachers and students. It flourished till

the end of the thirteenth century.³⁶ The tragic destruction of this renowned monastic establishment was made by the Muslim invaders.

3.5 Jagaddala : The famous Jagaddala monestry - the last great seat of Buddhist learning was founded by Rampala, the last illustrious Pala monarch who reigned between 1084-1130 A.D. The historical epic Ramacarita spoke of great monastery (Mahavihara) of Jagaddala which was situated in the ancient city of Ramavati³⁷ on the banks of the Varendra at the confluence of the Ganges and Karotaya.

The Jagaddala monastery was recognised as a great centre of Buddhist learning and important stronghold of Buddhism during the late medieval period. It too, endowed with a magnificent library, grew steadily under royal benefaction which was recorded by Sandhyakara Nandi, the court-poet of Rampala in his epic Ramacarita. This monastic library was well-explored and fully utilised by many scholars, teachers and foreign students alike. Though there was no direct reference to this regard, yet from the names and works of celebrated teachers of this University, one can conveniently trace the libraries at Jagaddala, a principal seat of Buddhist learning.³⁸ The works composed by the Pandits of this University were mainly Tantric in character and generally dealt with Pisacas, owls, Nagas, Yaksas etc. and their Sadhanas.³⁹ The special feature of the Jagaddala monastery was that many Locavas (Tibetan scholars) thronged there and translated many Sanskrit books into Tibetan.⁴⁰ Though the university had been destroyed by Muslim invasion in 1203 A.D., but in its short span of life it has made significant contribution to learning through its noted scholars who made it remarkable by their writings. Among them mention may be made of Vibhutipandra, who was a great Tibetan scholar and translated many Sanskrit works into Tibetan and bore the title of 'Mahapandita'. Danasila, another renowned scholar won several titles 'Pandita', 'Mahapandita', 'Upadhyaka' and 'Acarya' for his profound knowledge of both Sanskrit and Tibetan. He translated into Tibetan more than fifty four works, all of which exercised a great influence on Tibetan Buddhism. Subhakaragupta, another reputed scholar and author had lived here for sometime and wrote a Tantric commentary during his stay at the Mahavihara. Another celebrated scholar

Moksakaragupta in the monastery was a Master of Logic, on which he composed the Sanskrit work entitled 'Tarka-bhasa' which was translated into Tibetan. He also bore the titles of 'Bhikshu' and 'Mahapandita'.⁴¹ All such informations enable us to assume that there was in the grand monastic university of Jagaddala a fair collection of books, particularly in Sanskrit. Indeed such an educational establishment, a centre of great scriptural activity, could not function smoothly without a library.

3.6. Odantapuri : During the declining period of the University of Nalanda another monastic university was established at Odantapuri (Bihar) by a certain Gopala or Lokapala who ascended the throne about 730 A.D.⁴² It was perhaps, located in the district of Patna in Bihar and endowed with a grand and magnificent library of Buddhistic and Brahmanical works.⁴³ Abhayakaragupta, the head of the Mahayana school was a great writer in Sanskrit and wrote twenty six Sanskrit works. He rendered many works into Tibetan language at Odantapuri establishment. At the time of Abhayakaragupta, there were 1,000 monks in residence there. He was known by the high title of 'Arya MahaPandita'. This monastic university was also known for its noted scholar named Prabhakara.⁴⁴ The splendid library was pillaged by Muslim invaders in 1197 A.D.

4. Conclusion : Thus it is evident that the early monastic university library attached to these seats of learning played a conspicuous role in the development of scholarship throughout the world and became the significant partners of these monastic establishments in dissemination and transmission of knowledge all over the country and beyond the region. Besides, these monasteries developed in later days into an educational seminaries, which produced a galaxy of eminent scholars whose fame spread all over the Buddhist lands of Asia through their works and achievements. Therefore, the outflow of influence from the Buddhist monastic universities in ancient India led not only to the propagation and transmission of knowledge and appreciation of the teachings and tenets of Buddhism in other countries, but also to certain historic reforms there.⁴⁵

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RELEVANCE OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM IN MODERN SOCIETY

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Buddhism was introduced in Tibet in the seventh century A.D. and it flourished in Tibet receiving royal patronage. It has not been a mere system of belief to Tibetans; it encompasses the entirety of our culture and civilisation and constitutes the very essence of our lives. Of all the bonds which defined Tibetans as a people as a nation, religion was undoubtedly the strongest. Tibetan national identity became indistinguishable from its religion. Monasteries, temples and hermitages were found in every village and town throughout Tibet. By 1959, there were a total of 6,259 monasteries and temples with about 592,558 resident monks and nuns.

Soon after their invasion of Tibet, the Chinese authorities began to undermine the traditional social system and religion of Tibet. The monasteries, temples and cultural centres were systematically looted and destroyed in Tibet. The religion was publicly condemned and people were humiliated. The propagation of the teachings of the Buddha is discouraged and strictly controlled. The essence of Buddhism lies in mental and spiritual development achieved through intensive study with qualified lamas, understanding and practice. In this paper, there is an humble attempt to throw light on the salient features of Tibetan Buddhism and how they are relevant to the modern society ? Let us discuss that why Tibetan Buddhism is most popular in the western countries ?

Tibetan Buddhism is popular now a days in all over the world. There are now more than 500 centres of Tibetan Buddhism world wide and hundreds of thousands of adherents. It is due to the charismatic personality of his Holiness. The 14th Dalai Lama, who leads the struggle to free Tibet from Chinese occupation. He also carries Buddha's message all over the world.

There are three very attractive qualities : knowledge, manner and compassion by which the Dalai Lama is being loved by the people of the West. There is no any person who has not been experienced a tremendous impact on his life after having met His Holiness. According to Gyatso Tsering, Director, Library of Tibetan Works & Archieves, Dharmashala, there are two reasons why Westerners are turning to Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism. The first is that they are not satisfied with their lives in the West. The second is that they are disillusioned with their religion. They say that they want a more rational religion and more peace and happiness in their lives.

The Dalai Lama in his book, **Freedom in Exile : The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama**, has discussed about the rising popularity of Buddhism in the West. He says that in Buddhism there is a lot of emphasis on the practice of compassion or forgiveness. But there is one unique thing in Tibetan Buddhism is the emphasis on using reason and common sense. Even when we find contradiction in the scriptures, then we can disregard this scripture. The Buddha himself stated that, "My followers should not accept my teaching out of faith or out of respect. But rather through investigation and experiment". This thinking is unique. For those people who love reason and are more scientific minded, who want to experiment rather than use blind faith, this Buddhist way of approach is more suitable.

Another unique thing about Tibetan Buddhism is the combination of academia and through study with implementation and practice. These go together. For more serious people, the Tibetan Buddhist and Buddhist practitioner offers a deep and complete explanation.

The Dalai Lama always stresses two points, one "we believe that Buddha's nature exists in all sentient beings and that every human being has the potential to become Buddha, there is no point to feel oneself as inferior because of certain social conditions or caste. There is no point to feel like that. It is important to have self confidence and determination." Second, "2 with this determination, the actual method to overcome these difficulties is through education. Self-confidence combined with education can make everyone equal."

The Dalai Lama says that a person whose mind is conditioned by the study and practice of religion faces the circumstances of sorrow or suffering with patience and forbearance. The person who does not follow the path of religion may break under the impact of what he regards as calamities, and may end in either self frustration, or else in pursuits which inflict unhappiness on others. Humanitarianism and true love for all beings can only stem from an awareness of the content of religion. By whatever name religion may be known, its understanding and practice are the essence of a peaceful mind and therefore of a peaceful world. If there is no peace in one's mind, there can be no peace in one's approach to others, and thus no peaceful relations between individuals or between nations.¹

According to Tibetan Buddhists, the law of karma is the nothing but the natural law of cause and effect. Whatever external casual conditions someone comes across in subsequent lives result from the accumulation of that individual's action in previous lives. When the karmic force of past deeds reaches maturity, a person experiences pleasurable and unpleasurable mental states. They are a natural sequence of his own, previous actions.² In Tibetan, there are two types of karma, namely Sempai Las and Sampai Las. Sempai Las is the initial stage of Karma in which physical action is yet to follow and Sampai Las is the subsequent stage in which physical and oral actions occurs.³

Buddhism is one of the many religions which teaches us to be less selfish and more compassionate. It teaches us to be humane, altruistic and to think of others in the way we think for ourselves. Our daily thoughts and actions should be directed towards the benefit of others. Mahayana emphasises self sacrifice and the development of altruism while Hinayana teaches us the importance of not harming others. The practice of Buddhism in essence is therefore, not to harm others under any circumstances, and help others as much as possible.

By living in a society one should share the sufferings of others and practice compassion and tolerance, not only towards our loved ones but also towards the enemies. The ultimate purpose of Buddhism is to serve and benefit man.

The teachings of the Buddha comprise method for securing a continuous process of mind development by translating the teachings into real practice in accordance with the needs and realities of life. For this, a proper understanding of the realities or facts of life i.e. the nature of phenomena and objects as they really are, is necessary.

The 14th Dalai Lama in his book *My Land and My People*⁴ has written about unity of religions. According to him, all religions fundamentally aim at the same noble goal, in teaching moral precepts to mould the functions of mind, body and speech. They all teach us not to tell lies, or bear false witness, or steal, or take others' lives, and so on. Therefore, it would be better if disunity among the followers of different religions could come to an end. Unity among religions is not an impossible idea. It is possible, and in the present state of the world, it is especially important. Mutual respect would be helpful to all believers and unity between them would also bring benefit to unbelievers, for the unanimous flood of light would show them the way out of their ignorance. Thus, the Dalai Lama strongly emphasizes the urgent need of flowless unity among all religions. To this end, the followers of each religion should know something of other religions.

In Tibetan Buddhism, there are some sects which came into existence with a view to preserving the purity of the Buddha's teaching. Every sect has made its contribution to the Tibetan culture as a whole. In Tibetan Buddhism, the nyin-ma-pa sect contributed mysticism, the Kargyudpa Tantricism, the Sakya-pa wisdom and the Dge-lug-pa philosophy and ethics. Indeed, they have presented the Tibetans with rich and varied notions of religions practices to suit one's liking most.⁵ However, China has launched a new campaign under the slogan "make socialist literature and art prosper". It has ordered Tibetan writers to redefine Tibetan culture as non-Buddhist and attacked resistance to the Sinicisation of Tibetan Culture. The new campaign singles out for attack Tibetan historians and researchers at the University of Tibet and condemns the teaching of religion at the University and the inclusion of Buddhism in the study of Tibetan history and culture. Mr. Chen Kuiyuan, Tibet's Communist Party boss had outlined his new ideological definition of Tibetan culture. He has ridiculed as "utterly absurd" the notion that the

Tibetan national culture is actually a Buddhist culture and that there would be no Tibetan national culture without a Buddhist culture. "Buddhism is a foreign culture", he has declared, pointing out that Tibetan culture flourished for over a millenium before Buddhism came in the eighth century.⁶

The 14th Dalai Lama has also shown respect and equal status for all the sects of Tibetan Buddhism. Even Bonpos have been recognised as one of the sects of Tibetan Buddhism by the Dalai Lama. In 1977, after a direct appeal to the Dalai Lama, a Bonpo representative was invited to join the Assembly. He is Mr. Zang-po la and acting as Deputy Chairman of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile. In 1978, the abbot of the monastery in Dolanji, Rev. Sangya Tenzin, officially received the title of "throne-bearer (khri-'dzin), a title normally reserved for heads of sects, from the Dalai Lama. Furthermore, the tolerance and acceptance of Bon among the Tibetan refugee population has gradually improved. The forging of national identity in the early years of refugeehood, based as it was on a bias towards Central Tibet and Buddhism, is now in the hands of a second generation of Tibetan regugees, born in India and educated in a more modern educational system. This second generation recognises the political ideal of democracy and the value of empirical knowledge in the formation and maintenance of national identity. Whereas earlier on, the official identity were to disadvantage of the Bonpos nowadays the trend is towards an increasingly positive acceptance of the Bonpos as representing Tibet's indogenous heritage.

The immigrant Tibetan Bonpos of Dolanji are having a very cordial relations with the people of nearby villages. The people of nearby village participate in the death rituals of the Bonpos and the Bonpo priests are also called on by the local people to perform the death rituals of their kins. Whenever any religious functions are being held in the monastery, all the local people are also invited to participate. Some of the Professors of Yashwant Singh Parmar Univesity of Horticulture, Solan are also invited to attend the functions. These functions are the important part of the monastery, whose daily, monthly and annual time-table is marked by a regular series of rituals, performed by the monks. Additional rites are also performed on the demand of the local people. The Bonpos are also making ideal ways for the local

people to lead a happy and prosperous life. They have stopped meat-eating and taking alcohols. It has shown a great faith and devotion towards the Bonpos by the local people. Even the wives of local people are encouraging their husbands not to take alcohols. Thus, the Bonpos are checking the local people and have contributed in bringing a harmony in the society and towards the spiritual development of a practitioner.

It may be noted that Tibetan studies has gained at present international importance in and outside the University. A scholar, desirous of knowing the history of literature and culture of ancient India, can in no way ignore this study. An enormous Sanskrit literature - Buddhist classical - originals of which are lost, is preserved in Tibetan translations. They have only been partially laid under contribution - a large volume of wealth still lies buried in translations, which the scholars have not yet explored. A careful study of them will be a valuable contribution not only in the domain of Buddhist literature, but also on Indian history and on the civilization and culture of India and Tibet. Tibetan, thus, proves to be in some respects as important an instrument for the study of certain periods of Indian civilization as a language of that subcontinent. At the same time, the process of the introduction of Buddhism and the assimilation of Indian culture in Tibet provides us with an unusually interesting and historically valuable example of how people can adopt another culture and religion without totally forsaking its own deeply rooted traditions.

Visva-Bharati and Calcutta Universities may be cited as pioneer centres in introducing the study in Tibetan and in which scholars have made contributions to promote a systematic study and researches of Indo-Tibetan cultural relations through the ages. Several universities at state and central levels have included study of Tibetan in the courses such as Certificate and Diploma as well as one of papers of post-graduate. Many research institutes in India have also taken up programmes on Indology or Asian Studies with a special emphasis on Tibetan source materials available for them. Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok (Sikkim), Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharmasala (H.P.) and Central Institute of Higher Tibetan

Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi (U.P.) are engaged in editing and translating the Tibetan texts and publishing them. Many Tibetan scholars have learnt the Indian classical languages alongwith Hindi and English besides their mother language Tibetan and they are contributing in the field of Buddhist literature. Monastic education through traditional courses have been established at Mungod in Kanataka, Mussoorie in U.P., Sakya College, Dehradun (U.P.) and Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi (U.P.) Monks who have passed through these monastic institutions are also contributing in the field of Tibetan Buddhism. It is, therefore, hoped that Indian scholars will venture upon the various aspects of the Tibetan studies and thus promote the Indo-Tibetan Buddhism.

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RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY

Sheo Kumar Singh, D.Litt.

In this International Conference on Buddhist Studies in India we are to analyse the various problems of global destabilization causing grave concern to the modern society. Secondly we have to consider if religion, especially Buddhism, which is noted for morality and adaptability, can come to the rescue. Its founder i.e. the Buddha was not a legendary figure but a historical one like Christ & Mohammed. And lastly we would like to dwell on the desirability of Buddhist Studies in India for reviving the best suited culture of Buddhism in order to inculcate the moral values in the degenerating modern society which is governed by self seekers & crooked persons.

It may be stated here that religion & society are closely related. According to the Buddha Dhamma popularly called Buddhism objects of this ephemeral world cognizable by any of the sense-organs (viz. mind, eye, ear, nose, tongue & bodily skin) don't exist independently. Wordly life is a combination of mental states & material elements. Though they differ with each other, they have to function in symphony with one another in order to convey an apparently amalgamated fine looking effect. Similar is the case with social life. It necessitates the co-operation of different individual members of the society. As such we have to compromise with the members of different natures & circumstances. We are required to care for the convenience of each of us in the interest of the smooth running of the society. We should not be rigid. The present day society lacks this quality. It also transpires to have almost lost the two human qualities of HIRI & OTAPPA, i.e. self-shame & social fear causing hesitation while indulging in an unwholesome deed. Our society today is, therefore, strife-torn & immensely disturbed. We are facing very many problems. Some of them are cited below.

The society as a whole is becoming more & more materialistic & consumerist. The conduct & point of view of its members are concerned more

& more sensuous pleasure even at the cost of others. We want to avail of the maximum amenities of life offered by the developing science & technology of the day. This has given rise to individualism which is opposed to the call of socialism & world - brotherhood. People think first of their own selves & then about their families, but least in the interest of the society or nation & not to talk of the world as a whole. They are busy in making money. Man has no time to look after his or her spouse, child & old kins. So there is tension even in a family. Secondly, moral values are eroding & causing corruption, murder, rape, child-abuse & drug-trafficking. The youth is developing in a culture which is corrosive to their moral values & thinking. Population explosion is the third menace. It is putting a lot of pressure on the national economy. There is growing unemployment, food-crisis, separatist-attitude of state/society/ Nation, exploitation, growing social disparity & power - politics particularly in India. The natural environment, on the other side, is being affected by growing industrialization & urbanization. As a result we have to face acid-rain damaging soil-fertility & causing deforestation, depletion of Ozone-layer, flood, earthquake, etc. Rigidity & fanaticism is creating communal-tension & sectarianism. Thus we see that our society is burning from within & without. The Buddha has rightly said **"KONU HĀSO KAMĀNAND NICCAM PAJJALITE SATI"** (verse 146, Dhammapada), i.e. what for is this laughter & rejoicing when we are ever burning from within & without ?

Now let us consider the cause & remedy for the above noted calamities. **"TANHA"**, i.e., desire or craving is the root-cause of all sufferings. They are of three types : 1. **"KAMATANHA"**, i.e. positive sensuous desires, 2. **"BHAVATANHA"** i.e., hankering after prolongation of existence & 3. **"VIBHAVA-TANHA"**, i.e. the opposite desire for cessation of painful existence. The first two generate **"LOBHA"**, i.e. greed & are related to agreeable things & the last one called **"DOSA"** or **"VYAPADA"**, i.e. ill-will, enmity & desire to put an end to the unfavourable things or persons. Both **"LOBHA"** & **"DOSA"** are dominated by **"MOHA"** or **"AVIJJĀ"**, i.e. delusion or ignorance of the reality that **"DHAMMAS"**, i.e. phenomena are **"ANICCA"**, i.e. transitory & hence attachment to them cause **"DUKKHA"**, i.e. misery on their natural separation after decay. But since they are **"ANATTA"**, i.e.

conditioned or based (upon ignorance of the aforesaid truth) their uprooting leads to "NIBBANA", i.e. ultimate bliss. The Buddha has advised to practise the negation of "LOBHA", which is called "CAGA", i.e. self-sacrifice & benevolence & of "DOSHA", called "METTA", i.e. unqualified friendliness. The two faculties are the quint-essence of human values. We should develop "KARUNA", i.e. compassion for the unhappy, "MUDITA", i.e. cheerfulness in others' prosperity & pleasure & lastly "UPEKKHA", i.e. equanimity, tolerance & forgiveness for the ignorant persons & wrong - doers. They are called "BRAHMAVIHARA", i.e. Sublime States. The "VISUDDHIMAGGA IX" says that through developing these four one may reach "DASA PARAMI", i.e. the ten perfections namely "DANA", i.e. Almsgiving & liberality : "SILA", i.e. Morality "NEKKHAMMA", i.e. renunciation; "PANNA", i.e. wisdom; "VIRIYA", i.e. energy; "KHANTI", i.e. forbearance; "SACCA", i.e. truthfulness; "ADHITTHANA", i.e. resolution; "METTA", i.e. all-embracing amity & "UPEKKHA", i.e. equanimity. By imbibing sublimity & inculcating the same in the society we can put an end to the prevailing conflicts.

Buddhism is a philosophy of life here in this world & hereafter. For a blissful life which is the sole aim of all our endeavours & all the religions aim at, the Buddha advised pursuance of "MAJJHIMA PATIPADA", i.e. the Middle Path. It comprises the moral & spiritual discipline of "SILA", i.e. full control over senses lest "LOBHA", "DOSHA", or "MOHA" defile them, "SAMĀDHI", i.e. deep meditation & "PAÑÑĀ", i.e. true view of universe. It maintains rational balance between the two "ANATĀ", i.e. Extreme types of conduct & view called "KĀMESUKĀMSUKHALIKĀNUYOGA", i.e. self indulgence & "ATTAKILAMATHANUYOGA", i.e. self mortification. The former was adopted by the hedonic materialists & the latter extreme of asceticism by the "NIGANTHAS". The latter engenders "AHAMKĀRA", i.e. egoism & fosters "MAMKĀRA", i.e. possession instinct causing conflicts & compelling the individual to be enmeshed in cycles of births & deaths. The "MAJJHIMĀ PATIPADĀ" is scientific & logical in the sense that it is based on observation & analysis of the different events of life from birth to death, eg birth, sickness, contact with the undesired & separation from the dear & desired persons, old age, death, etc & found them riddled with miseries. The

fulfilment of some of our desires still intensifies our pain on its natural disappearance. All these afflictions continue in different births till "TANHA" is completely annihilated. This has been well explained in the "ANULOMA PATICCASAMUPPADA", i.e. depending on "AVIJJA", "TANHA", arises & on "TANHA", "DUKKHA" arises. The 'PATILOMA PATICCASAMUPPĀDA', on the other hand unfolds that complete cessation of "DUKKHA" is conditioned on "TANHĀ" which again is based on the full extinction of "AVIJJĀ". This "AVIJJĀ" or ignorance is the prius of all the subsequent events & needs uprooting with a view that stream of misery be finally stopped. This 'AVIDYĀ' is a co-associate of "PUDGALA" or individual which the Buddhists prefer to call a continuum of consciousness ("SANTĀNA"). The Buddha laid paramount stress on the mind which is the "PATITTHĀ", i.e. basis of all deeds. By mind the Buddha meant "CETNĀ", i.e. intention or motive & said "CETANAHAM KAMMAM VADAMI" i.e. consciousness or intention do I speak action. He denounced external practices & observances as "SILABBATAPARĀMĀSA", i.e. mere ritualism. If a man lives on vegetables as a strict vegeterion & yet entertains "VYĀPĀDĀ", i.e. ill-will, malice & intolerance towards his fellow-beings, his vow of "AHIMSĀ", i.e. non-ejury amounts to nothing short of humbug.

It has been stated earlier that we perform all sorts of immoral actions causing conflicts just with a view to offering maximum comfort to our body, to which we are too much attached. So in order to avoid tension & to cultivate "VIRĀGA", ie dispassion to it the Buddha in "MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA", vol III, pp 154-155, says that a disciple should keep his mind firmly concentrated on the mental image of a skelton, of a corpse infested by worms or of a corpse blue-black in colour, of a festering corpse, of corpse riddled with wholes of corpse swollen up & being eaten by vultures & various other birds & insects, worms, foxes & other animals & bones dried, scattered & become white as a conch.

Having discussed above some of the main theoratical points of Buddhism I would now like to bring out a few verses of the "DHAMMAPADA" below which will throw some light on its practical side. Verse 3 says "AKOCCHI MAM ... YETAM UPNAYAHANTI VERAM TESAM NA

SAMMATI, i.e. 'he has rebuked, beaten, conquered, plundered me' grieving so does never their enmity pacify. So does verse 50 advise '**NA PARESAM VILOMĀNI ... ATTANO VA AVEKKHEYA**', i.e. one should not criticise others as to what they did & what not, but of course one should take full care to introspect as to what he did which he should not have done & what he did not do which he should have done. Here is a novel idea contained in verse 201 : '**JAYAM VERAM PASAVATI**', i.e. victory earns enmity which makes the victorious restless & always anxiously cautious about his protection against the impending attack of his defeated enemy who is in the lookout for the suitable opportunity to take revenge of his defeat & thus both the victorious & the defeated have no peace of mind. And lastly I feel tempted to quote the Buddhas advice as contained in the "**VITAKKASANṬṬHĀNA SUTTA**" of the "**MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA**" as follows :

In order to eradicate the evil thought of "**LOBHA**", "**DOSA**" or "**MOHA**" the disciple i should set aside this & gain another wholesome object as replacing "well" for "temple" ii. should reflect on the misery of these thoughts of painful results, iii. should pay no attention to these thoughts, iv. should consider the compound nature of these thoughts or v. with teeth clenched & tongue pressed against the gums he should with his mind retrain, suppress & root out these thoughts.

We have to bear in mind that Buddhism is primarily a monkish religion & so the "**SANGHA**", i.e. fraternity of monks should be treated as a model of society. The Buddha prescribed "**CATUPACCAYA**", i.e. the four basic requirements of 1. stitched rags for covering body, 2. only one meal a day, 3. dwelling in the solitude & 4. diet & medicine of herbs for the sick. But there was no rigidity in accepting any other type of raiment, food, dwelling or medicine received as a gift lest the monk degenerate into excesses & there is any sacrifice of principle. But the gifts belonged to the fraternity, i.e. the society of monks & not to the individual one. This is a lesson for us and present day society has to see that the basic needs of the members must be provided in order to avoid struggles. Of course, there should be proper arrangement for their education too & for that the "**VIHARA**" may be treated

as a model. It was an educational establishment for moral & spiritual training as detailed in "VINAYA", i.e. rules of discipline including manners, etiquette & decency. It was this education & training which attracted Yuan Chwang, Itsing, etc. to be admitted in the academic institutions like the Nalanda Mahavihara & other of the time. The scientific & humanistic religion of Buddhism preached by the religious missions of Dhammasoka convinced & attracted the persons not only of India or the border lands, but also of Ceylon, Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus, Cyreni & other Hellenistic Kingdoms of Asia, Africa & Europe. Even now it is a living religion in Srilanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Combodia, Vietnam, China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, Darjeeling, Bhutan, Laddakh, Mangolia, Bangladesh (Chitgong) & some portions of Nepal (of course it has been replaced by Islam & Christianity in Malaya, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Philippines, Afganistan & Céntral Asia). The spread of Buddhism to such an extent was the result of its adaptability of different cultures of the places it has travelled. This is evident in Gandharan Art which is an admixture of the cultures of India, Persia & Greek.

As for the aforesaid two major International religions other than Buddhism it may be stated that Christianity stoussine love & humaness imlitated the important institutions of Buddhism. But Islam thrived at the cost of Buddhism which the followers of the former called "Butaparasti" now, known as idol-worshipping. But caves carved with colossal images of the Buddha have been found in Afganistan which is an Islamic country. Efforts are being made now a days by the Taliban extremists to destroy them & the Kabailis of Kabul are fighting against such extremism which the Buddha has denounced. This is evident in the Asokan Rock Edict xii & Pillar Edict vi which say that member of all sects should know & appriciate one another's view though disagreeing on certain points. Any how, we would like to adopt the Iqbal version of religion : *Majahaba nahi sikhata apas men vair rakhana*, i.e. religion does not teach to quarrel amongst us. Islam prescribes: "JABTA", "JAKATA" & "RAHAMA" i.e. tolerance & forbearance gift from the saving after the bare necessities of life we meet & compassion for the unhappy respectively. They somewhat resemble the Buddhist "BRAHMA VIHARAS" or "PARAMIS" & can ease the prevailing tension in the modern

society. Under the prevailing disturbed situation as detailed earlier the world is looking at India for guidance. The country had produced the eminent moralist, academician, such as the Chinese Yuan Chwang & Itsing, Singha-
 lese Aryadeva, Tukharian Bodhidharma, Korean Aryavarman, Indian Atisa
 Dipankara, Srijnana & Kamalashila who had established Buddhism in Tibet,
 Indian Prajnasrijnanakurti, Subhakara Gupta, Vibhuti Chandra & Danashila
 who had translated from sanskrit into Tibetan. Modern India also has the good
 luck to be the birth place of the eminent Nationalists like Mahatama Gandhi,
 Bhagat Singh, Subhas Chandra Bose, J.P. & Lohia. But on their sad demise
 there is a criminal bureaucrat - politician nexus, with which our parliament
 was seen greatly concerned during the last six days. Special Session of Golden
 jubilee celebration of our Independence. Now a days all including religious
 establishments are hankring after more & more money. Verse 186 of the
 "DHAMMAPADA", however says, "NA KAHAPANA VASSENA TITTI ...
 APPASĀDĀ DUKKHĀ KĀMĀ", i.e. even the rain of coins cannot satisfy
 man's sensuous desires offering evanescent happiness leading to suffering on
 seperation. (The Buddha, however, was not averse to the rational enjoyment
 of civilized life as we have stated above).

Revival of Buddhism is, therefore, a desirability. This pious task may
 very well be shouldered by the inmates of the institutions of Buddhist Studies
 in India. Since they are the descendants of the aforementioned teachers of
 morality & spirituality, it is imperative for the former to inculcate moral
 values which are degenerating everywhere & in every walk of life in the
 modern society. But it is desired that the inmates of these institutions should
 not only study Buddhism, but also try their best to practise its teachings as
 detailed above. They should try to do good to others without ever remembering
 the same as the Urdu maxim goes, "NEKI KAR DERNIYA MEM
 DALA", i.e. do good to others & forget it. On the occasion of the Golden
 Jubilee Celebration of the Indian Independence the Expansion of Buddhist
 Studies in every district of India is a desideratum so that the Buddhist way of
 thinking & conduct may spread again in different parts of the world &
 problems of global destabilization be minimised.



RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM & OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY

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In this conference on Buddhist Studies in India we are to discuss the problems, the modern society is confronted with and their remedies found in Buddhism and other religions.

Modern society has been experiencing the boon and bane of the miraculous progress in science, which has globalized the universe. It is though television in our room itself that we see and hear of calamities befallen upon the people of earthquake hit area in one corner of the world and from its opposite corner food and medicine packets are supplied to them by relief plane within no time. On the other hand the ravages caused in Hiroshima and Nagashaki by exploding the atom bomb some six decades ago are still alive to create horror. Even now both the developed and developing countries are terribly busy with nuclear programmes and the time-limit of complete disarmament has again been extended to 2003 and further for four years more. This is all because of erosion of human values, which are preached by religious and spiritual teachers according to the socio-economic climate. Our spiritual vision has declined to the lowest ebb and hence there is a social unrest all over the world.

Society, science and religion/spirituality are interlinked and each of them has its bearing on the others as well as on the economy of the time. Science and spirituality deal with the search for truth. Science has produced many wonders and its pageant of endless discoveries has changed the course of life of the mankind. But it has failed to reveal the very purpose of life which is total freedom from miseries and achievement of ultimate bliss. This is the sole aim and object of all of our efforts and all the religions aim at it. The spirituality that has no bearing on everyday life of the society of the time is

just a show piece, spiritual truths cannot be separated from social realities. All religious teachers reflected upon the solutions to the problems of life here in this world and hereafter. The moral lesson they conveyed to the people were often related to the eternal challenges of life and living.

Our historical Buddha was deeply moved by the human sufferings of birth sickness, contact with the unfavourable person and things, separation from the dear ones, old age and death. It was the agony of the inevitable sufferings of human life that took him to quest for the total deliverance from miseries through dispassionate conduct and view of the wordly life. vis-a-vis self-indulgence and self mortification. Confucius's ethical code was deciphered in a distorted era of moral terpidation. Judaism's belief in God was a vision of life as a result of struggles against tortuous slavery. Christ inveighed against the lust and greed eating into the moral fibre of the society. Mohammed fought against corruption and hatred pervading in Mecca of his time. He advocated righteous conduct, freedom and equality, integrity and compassion, justice and unity and total submission to one God. From the aforestated fact it is obvious that for all the religious teachers the seed of spirituality could only be sprouted in the womb of society. The real solution of endless human miseries, personal or societal, in the ultimate analysis was and will be spiritual. The religious teachers were convinced that the root of diseases was the human ego the self centredness the lust for power or wealth which has to be overcome for final deliverance from all diseases.

I would now like to sort out the major dismality of the modern society as follows :

Differences between the poor and the rich are widening. Poor people are not able to meet the bare necessities of food, clothing medicine and education. The affluent on the other hand are wallowing in abundance. Science and technology has produced enormous consumer goods besides various amenities for a comfortable life. It is very difficult to rid oneself from the lust of endless luxurious goods made available by the consumerist culture of the day. Still it would be suicidal to mould oneself in accordance with the market beyond a limit. Almost all spiritualists have advised a simple living

and high thinking. Scientific and economic development programmes are motivated by maximisation of profit instead of being directed to the well being of the society. All of our actions are enlivened only when saturated with sacrifice on the part of their performers as has been enunciated by the various spiritual teachers.

Freedom of expression and dissent is suppressed by the ruling elites. Ethnic conflicts have become common features which are frequently occurring in Srilanka, India, Lebanon, France, Britain, etc. The mode of industrialisation, the type of technologies used, the extravagant life-style and consumption pattern of the middle class and the policies relating to the logging, fishing, farming and land reclamation have contributed to the colossal damage to air, water, soil and forests which comprise our environment. Drug addiction has caused the dreaded disease of AIDS and drug trade cutting national boundaries has become the most lucrative one. This is evident in certain Latin American Countries. Use of intoxicants is prohibited in Sikhism. Buddhism prohibits its trade **PAÑCAKA NIPĀTA AṄGUTTARANIKĀYA**. The advent of machine and automation has snatched the loaves and jobs of many. The technology of rural handicrafts of dyer, black-smith, shoe-maker and the like are not being utilised to promote cottage industries and small-scale industries. Instead big factories are being installed and environment is polluted. The impact of urbanisation has made the society individualist. We are so busy in making money that we have no time to look after our spouse, toddlers and old parents. The latter two are kept in crèche and old men house respectively. Number of divorce is increasing. Thus there is tension even in a small family.

To add all there is a menace of ever increasing population and unemployment. Queer Hippy are running here and there in search of peace. Thus the whole atmosphere is surcharged with frustration and utter dissatisfaction with worldly life. But what is the reason behind these problems and what is the solution thereof ?

The underlying cause is moral degradation of man of today. Economic and other temporal activities are in fact, manifestations of spirit. Modern society, it transpires from the above, has adopted the policy of life and living

as **'YAVAJĪVET SUKHAM JĪVET,'** i.e. eat, drink and be merry so long you are alive and the menace of this trend of mind is contained in the proverb **'PARĀNNAM DURLABHAM LOKE,'** i.e. grab others' belongings', This is quite contrary to the traditional moral which is reflected in the saying : **'ATMAVAT SARBA BHŪTESU, PĀRA DRAVYESU, LOSTRAVAT,'** i.e. all the beings of the universe should receive sympathetic treatment of ours and there should be no exploitation. The self-centred attitude of life and the trend of exploitation has terribly affected our social life and scientific developments directed more towards destruction. Marxism has dwelt upon the way of fulfilment of arnal needs to a great extent. But Karl Marx had hardly anything to say about disease, decay and death which have always been and will remain common to all every-where as the imperatives of life. Besides, he ignored the eventualities after death. The intellectual basis of his philosophy got dimmed within a century after his death. All religious and spiritual teachers have emphasized controlling of desires and curbing the lust so that the basic needs must be fulfilled, sans by excesses. Mahatma Gandhi understood it well when he observed 'There is enough in this world for every one's needs but not for everyone's greed. The Buddha advised that we must have full mastery over mind and remain restrained and alert so that our senses are not enslaved by (i) **LOBHA**, i.e. positive desire for the agreeable, (ii) **'DOSHA'** (or **'VYĀPĀDA'**), ie. repulsion, ill-will or enmity, or (iii) **'MOHA'** or **'AVIDYĀ'**, i.e. delusion about the truth of this ephemeral wordly life which is composed of the mental states and material elements. The efficiency of Chanakya's dictum **'RAJYAMULAM INDRIYA JAYAH,'** i.e. the rein the governance should be in the hand/hands of the person/persons who has/have conquered his/her/their senses, is clear in the context of the present day government particularly of India where there is criminalization of politics even in the legislature in order to manage for the utmost comforts for this body and still demanding respect. After all this body comprises pus, urine, bones and the like filths. Besides desires are endless and rarely satisfying and even if some are fulfilled they finally lead to agony on their natural disappearance.

Modern society appears to be following the extreme path of self-indulgence of hedonic materialism of the Buddha's time as stated earlier. As for the other extreme of self-mortification of his time, performance of self-immolation, hunger-strike and **DHARANĀ** at times is seen, but that also for temporal gains, in lieu of spiritual ones and hence not so much effective. Contrary to these two extremes the Buddha preached the Middle path i.e. the objective view of impermanence of phenomena and dispassionate conduct. This is the proper remedy for all the fundamental ailments of birth, death, etc. as stated earlier. The Buddha was not averse to rational enjoyments, of course, lest one run into excesses and cause scarcity of others' needs leading to conflicts. But he attached utmost importance to tolerance and preached the practice of unqualified friendliness by imbibing **KARUNA**, i.e. compassion for the distressed, **MUDITA**, i.e. happiness over others progress & pleasure, & **UPEKKHA** i.e. equanimity & forgiveness for the wrong-doers quite as a mother does issues. The present day society requires this motherly treatment & patting. It is remarkable that the mother possesses all the aforementioned sublime states. She bears the tolerance of the earth which swallows all dirt & filth thrown upon/inside her & transforms them into manures for better yield. Further, her selflessness is unrivalled as that of a tree which offers fruits & shadow to the tired passers by & protects them from the scorching heat of the sun without the desire of any return. It is because of these qualities that the adage goes; **'YATRA NĀRĪPUJYANTE RAMANTE TATRA DEVATĀ**, i.e. gods (of affluence & happiness) dwell where women are worshipped'. The 'female' folk is proud to encompass all virtues of 'male' and not vice-versa. (If all males die at a time, even then creation will continue through the posthumous male-child of the female who might have conceived before the death of her husband). The female is endowed with the capacity to hold and bear fruits as that of the earth. She is friend, philosopher & guide of her male companion and as such she has to play the role of Ratna, the wife of the author of the Hindi Ramayan and to see that her associate male member does not go astray.

I am now inclined to conclude that the salient, features of all the spritual teachers be sorted out & a universal view of spirituality is evolved (in the light of the aforestated paragraph, I dare suggest) where there is no horror of hell not even the lust for heaven as enunciated in various religions, but only inspiration for renunciation of craving, ill-will, unkindness & injury as contained in this motto of human life : **'SARVE BHAVANTU SANTU NIRĀMAYĀ'**, i.e. 'May all animate or inanimate objects of the universe remain ever happy & free from all diseases. So has the Buddha detailed in the **'MAHĀ MAṆĠALA SUTTA'**. Further, let us feel oneness with nature which inspired the **'THERĀ'**, i.e. the Buddhist monks to meditate upon the Substancelessness of worldly life (**THERAGĀTHA**). Let us view the beauties of the furrowed fields, which inspired the Buddha to ask Anand, his personal attendant to sew agged robes for Him in that fashion as even now put on by the monks of different countreis.

Lastly I venture to say that the expansion of Buddhist Studies in India will promote the aforementioned sense of spirituality in the modern society. The members of such institutions are, after all, the descendants of prince Mahendra and his sister Sanghmitra. In this world let there be Brahmanism, Buddhism, Sikkhism, Christianity, Islam, Marxism or any Ism, the maladies of decay & death will ever persist and they have to be remedied. And for this all of our actions must be performed in the interest of the well-being of all concerned. Only then the abominable constituents of the body can be perfumed. Such perfume will spread even if the wind blows in the opposite direction.



BUDDHA'S NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MODERN SOCIETY

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Out of the many founders of Religions in the world there are four whose religions have moved very much the modern society. They are Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and Krishana. The word Dhamma was used by Buddha and had nothing to do with rituals or observances. Even the commonest people could follow what Buddha actually preached.

The word TODAY, under consideration, means present times which is relative to its PAST and FUTURE. The PAST is the foundation of the PRESENT. As a matter of fact the PAST of this TODAY begins with Gotama's Enlightenment at the root of the Bodhi Tree at Bodhgaya. He preached his First Sermon at Isipatana (Migadāye) at Sarnath near Varanasi. At that time the six heretical teachers like Pūrana Kassapa, Makkhali Gosala, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Nigantha Nātaputta (Mahāvīra), Ajita Kesakambalī, Sañjaya Belatthiputta and others preached their own doctrines. Gautama, the Buddha, preached the Four fold Noble Truth which was realised by Him. During His own life-time, He Himself solved the problems of His followers in practising the codes of conduct (= SĪLAS) enumerated by Him. He also moderated and changed the monastic rules as and when found necessary. Buddha gave a discourse to his five old disciples, the Pañcavaggiya. This discourse is known as the 'Turning of the wheel of Law' (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Pathamadhamma-desanā, Mahāvagga, Vinaya I, page 10; Samyutta-Nikāya, P.T.S. Vol. V, page 420) which contains the ethical code of Early Buddhism. It explains the Fourfold Noble Truth (Cattāri Ariya-saccāni), viz. suffering (dukkha), Origin of suffering (dukkha-samudaya), Cessation of suffering (dukkhanirodha), the path that

leads to the cessation of suffering (**dukkha-nirodha-gāminī-patipadā**) which is known as the Noble Eightfold path. The essence of this preaching is also known as the Middle Path. It consists of eight noble paths, viz. right view (**sammā diṭṭhi**), right thought (**sammā saṅkappa**), right speech (**sammā vācā**), right action (**sammā kammanta**), right livelihood (**sammā ājīva**), right effort (**sammā vyāyāma**), right mindfulness (**sammā sati**) and right concentration (**sammā samādhi**). These eight good practices have continuously been influencing our society.

Non-violence, friendship, compassion, mutual co-operation and also the Noble Eightfold Path are the ways leading to the improvement of life in the modern society. As already stated, Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path influences our society. The first path of the noble truth is known as Right View. It is the understanding of true knowledge. It is self-examination and self-observation. Every man should have right view about the modern society. There are so many noises in our society for want of right view. Right view influences the remaining seven paths of the Noble Truth. Seven other paths are guided by this path. Right view helps a man to gain Right Thought, when thought and ideas become clear, man's speech and action are also brought to a proper state. Right view means the things of the world as they really are. It means realisation of the four noble truths. Knowledge of suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of suffering, the way leading, to the cessation of suffering are the Right view. "Dukkhe ñāṇam, dukkha samudaye ñāṇam, dukkhanīrodhe ñāṇam, dukkhanīrodha gāmiyā paṭipadīya ñāṇam ayaṃ vuccati sammā diṭṭhi" - (Vibhaṅga, J. Kassapa, page, 133). Thus we see that this view has influences in our Society. If every man has right view, our society will be calm, quite and peaceful. So how our society will be, this will depend on this path - right view. Most of the People can't feel the true nature of life for want of Right View. The present society is full of sufferings. This Right View brings the clear idea of real life.

Right Thought is the second factor of the Path. It comprises wisdom. Right Thought is the result of Right View. Human beings have an intellectual power which acts behind all good deeds. Wrong words and works are the result of wrong thoughts of a man. But if a man has a systematic concentration

on Right Thoughts he has to produce good results. Wrong words and deeds are the results of a wrong condition of mind. Right Thought is associated with renunciation, absence of ill-will, absence of cruelty. There are so many murder cases in our society for want of Buddha's right thought which is one of the path of the Noble Eightfold path. This path indicates man for non-violence, friendship, compassion, mutual co-operation etc. in our society. But alas, in our society most of the people is suffering for want of right thought. They should follow Buddha's important path which is known as Right Thought.

Right speech depends on Right Thought. If the thoughts are right the speech also will be right. This fact is stated in the section on moral precepts. It controls a man's verbal and physical actions, his behaviour. It is a means. It leads to concentration, again concentration leads to Wisdom. Mental purity is not possible without moral purity. Right behaviour is the basic principle for a lay follower. One should abide by the basic principles to purify one's mind through the five precepts for training which are known as Pancasila. Right speech means refraining from speaking falsehood, malicious words, harsh and frivolous talk "musāvāda veramanī, pisunā vācāya veramanī, pharusaya vācāya veramanī, ayaṃ vuccati sammāvācā" (Vibhaṅga, J. Kassapa, Page, 133). We should always speak the truth. But unfortunately our society is full of falsehood, malicious words, harsh and frivolous talk which are antagonistic to the interests of our Society. This path of the Buddha i.e. right speech is very much necessary to protect our modern society. So right speech is very useful for our modern society. Right action is the second constituent of moral precepts in Buddhism. It is refraining from killing, stealing and misconduct. "Pāṇatipāta veramanī, adinnā dānā veramanī, Kāmesumicchācārā veramanī ayaṃ vuccati sammā Kammanto" (Vibhaṅga, J. Kassapa, page, 133). A man who has compassion abstains from killing. We should not kill life. If we remember this path, the devotees of non-violence, Gandhi, Indira and Rajiv were not cruelly shot at in the land of Buddha's past and future. But alas A cruel person, a robber can kill easily. We think that poverty is the root of stealing, killing etc. But these are harmful to Society. Our present society is full of killing, stealing and misconduct. If man follows the Buddha's path -

right action, our society will be pure, peaceful and delightful. Absence of self-control is the basis of this wrong action. We should follow Buddha's right action for the protection of our modern society.

Right livelihood is the third and last factor in the morality group. Right livelihood means refraining from earning livelihood by improper means. Right livelihood is to bring true happiness to the individuals. It offers our society proper and a good relations among people. Unjust and wrong ways of living bring unhappiness and disharmony amongst the whole society. Men should try to live honestly and to earn money by right means as also by right conduct. If each individual behaves well and leads a decent life in society the question evil to them will not arise. Real happiness depends on purity and peace of mind. Again it is said that poverty may be the cause of crime. If the economic condition of society is good, crime is lessened and there is peace and harmony in society. Our present society is full of dishonesty, nobody abides by Buddha's path, so our society is suffering on account of cruelty, wrong action & wrong livelihood. If they abide by the rules of the Buddha's Right livelihood, the society would be calm, quite and peaceful.

Right effort is the sixth path of the Noble Eightfold Path. It means the Effort or exertion to remove the existing evil thoughts, to keep the mind free from being polluted by fresh evil thoughts and to preserve and increase the good thoughts. Right Effort is inter related and inter-dependent. It removes the evil and unhealthy thoughts of a being. Right effort is actually the control of mind. If a man has no control of mind there will be no peace of mind. The control of mind is not easy. So man is superior to beasts. Physical strength is dominant in animals but mental energy is in man who has power of thinking and checking all evil thoughts and cultivating healthy thoughts. One need not fight for the evil thoughts. Buddha's Right Effort reached its highest when he sat under the Bodhi Tree for deep meditation and became the Perfectly Enlightened One'. So Right Effort is very necessary for our modern Society.

Right mindfulness of all that is happening within the body and mind including feelings and examination of the things of the world. Forbearance, harmlessness and compassion are virtues through which one brings protection to mind. These are the foundation of mindfulness. A man must be mindful and careful of his thoughts, words and actions. Right Mindfulness guards a

man from wrong works. Sense desire, ill-will, lust, jealousy, pride and other wrong works upset our balance of mind. But our Right Mind fulness helps to check such harmful works. It strengthens a man's character. It helps a man for mental developement. So in our society it is very useful.

Right concentration is the mental exercise for man's inner development. It takes the form of silent prayer and therefore is an important stage of meditation. A perfect saint keeps aloof from sensual pleasures and bad states. He then attains and dwells in the first meditation, the second meditation, the third meditation and then the fourth or last one. A sincere student is compared with a meditator. As a student requires a silent atmosphere for his deep study, a meditator also requires a silent place for his meditation.

In our society not only the students but also all persons are like the students. So they should have right concentration. If there is right concentration in every person, our society will be pure, calm and peaceful. Our Society will be an ideal society at present and even in future if we follow the Noble Eightfold Path of the great man Buddha. The Noble Eight fold Path raises a man from lower to higher levels of existence. It leads a man from darkness to light, from passion to a passionless stage. It indicates the path to purification and deliverance. It aims at the highest purification, perfect mental health.

The world is in extreme misery. One nation is exercising authority over others by any means. We may rightly explain this situation as 'Mātsya-nyāya'. There are vindictive Devadattas everywhere in the society. The world can never be safe and secured unless some Buddhas come forward to shelter creatures in the bosom. Words of Buddha still resound in the air 'Enmity can never be pacified by enmity'. Consequently it is regaining the prestigious position of a world religion. Hardly is there a University in Europe and America too which has no provision for the Buddhistic Studies. Western thinkers have begun to concentrate on Buddhist lines. The so called 'no-religion' persons or 'free thinkers' are adopting the Buddhist ways. Buddhists are undoubtedly marching very fast but they have to be very cautious and conscious in respect of following the right step forward.

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RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM IN MODERN SOCIETY

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The advent of Buddhism in the 6th Century B.C. was an epoch-making event not only because of a great religious establishment and of a new philosophical and spiritual beginning but also because it ushered a system in the society for bringing the social orders on the basis of 'tradition by deed'. The formation of Buddhist Sangha of mendicants is an important Institution in which every member occupied equal status according to one's initiation and ability. There was no place for unequal distinction according to birth of a person. All the members of Sangha held equal position. The Buddha once described his Sangha like an ocean in which all the rivers when they join it lose their identity and form one shape and colour and called by one name. Similarly there could be no identity of a member of the Sangha high or low on account of his erstwhile caste. As a matter of fact equanimity or samata was the basis of the organization. This feature of the Sangha was the ground work for its success; and in course of time this proved to be pragmatically a dynamic force to inculcating a new ethos in Indian Society. The sramanic movement based on the 'tradition by deed' got an unflinching support and co-operation from the larger section of the society belonging to all walks of people.

It is interesting to note that the members of Buddhist Order for being based on 'equanimity' or Samata attracted attention of the people from the so-called upper class of the Brahmanic group as well; and many of them joined the sangha. Several intellectuals from this section of Society also gave support to this system which was based on Karma. Many intelligent and learned Brahmins who had earlier attained high position and regard in the society also became attracted towards it. Some of them gave leadership to propagate this movement of **Kammavada**. The two chief disciples of Lord Buddha, Sariputta

and Moggalana hailed from Brahmin caste. It is a notable fact that over 40% of the elite monks and nuns as listed in the Theragatha and Therigatha belonged Brahmin caste, 29% of the Vaisyas; and 22% to the Ksatriyas caste¹. The role played by them in disseminating the ethical and spiritual value among the Indian Society had no doubt been immense. The monks and nuns were however instrumental in shaping the Indian Society in a better pattern. They depended for their subsistence like food, dress, shelter and medicine on the liberality of the common mass; and in return, the Buddhist Sangha not only preached morality and spirituality but also imparted education to them. The Viharas and Mahaviharas in the country functioned as the educational centres both for the primary and higher standards respectively. In these centres both monks and laymen used to learn the texts and also practice maditation or Vipassana. Some of these centres became renowned for textual learning while others for spiritual training. The Buddhist monks and nuns who resided there delivered training both in Pariyatti (theoretical knowledge) and Patipatti (spiritual practice) to all who soever joined these centres without any distinction of caste, creed or nationality.

The Vinaya or Discipline and the Dharma or Ethical Norm as propounded by Lord Buddha formed the very foundation of the development of the sramanic society in the country. It is true that the Vedic or Brahmanic system in the country also wielded much importance to enriching cultural values in the country in its own way. As against this pattern of social norm based on varnasrama Dharma or 'tradition by birth' the Sramanic way of life-pattern had an upper hand in dominating the cultural ethos of Indian people in the past. No doubt the Indian Society, for a very long time, got prospered through these two-pronged ideological cultural streams and fashioned the shape of the country in their own way putting it to a stupendous height. It is but important to note that the sramanic pattern of Social order, particularly the Buddhist had played a senior rope to others.

Most of the Writers of the Buddhism have tried to depict Lord Buddha only was the teacher of Nibbana. A few of them have made even a stray

reference to how he dealt with the problem of the contemporary society. This gives an incomplete picture of the teacher of humanity. It is true that first and foremost the Buddha was the teacher of Nibbana. But then he did not lose sight of certain social problems of his way. He made the greatest contribution to the solution of social problems. It is also true that the Buddha wanted to bring about a radical change in the social order and that by peaceful revolution, revolution of thought. All beings were equal in the eye of Tathagata. He treated all men on an equal footing. This was the motto of his life : "just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life so should one practise loving kindness towards all beings.² "As the living example of this motto Tathagata had no favour for or prejudice against anybody. Far from all this, the mission of his life was the creation of conditions for justice, brotherhood, peace and happiness of all people. We can analyse His teachings in the context of 'the relevance of Buddhism in modern society as given below :

Today we can observe that our modern society is passing through great crisis because of one sided development of science and technology which is endangering the very existence of man. Man is losing his moral and spiritual mournings. There is a cut short throat competition for material possession and enjoyment. There is a scant regard for values which binds man with himself and with society. This is the nature of our manstrous century. There is a chinese proverb that "when a bear catches at the North pole he troubles the sand of sahara. "This is the situation our age, the lost part of the twentieth century. In order to make this world happier and richer religion can contribute much. We can say strongly that Buddhism can play a historical role in creating a new social order by harmonizing man with society. The modern man is alienated for himself. The sense of rootlessness unbelongingness is creating disharmony and discontentment. It is eating away the very vitality of man and society. Disharmony and discontentment are ground of tension.

The modern war would be quite different traditional war. During the time of Buddha there were sixteen small states in India known as Janapadas. Every now and then they used to fight among themselves for establishing

superiority over others. Dhammapada enumerates that, "All tremble at punishment. All fear death. Putting oneself in the place of other, one should not indulge in killing nor cause another to kill." Likewise all the gathas observes counting disharmony in society amounts to endangering one's own existence. There are about seventeen (17) verses which deal with the problems of social harmony. The Buddha says that one should take an example of his own which evaluating the merits and demerits of others. One should not harbour any thought of doing any harm to any living beings. To maintain social harmony one should follow the path of Dhamma. Buddhism is our daily life by living up to the ideals of Buddhism one would live a life of Dhamma. Making this precepts as the basis of social harmony and brotherhood the Buddha sent groups of monks in all the four directions to preach Dhamma. He says, "Go ye forth, Oh Bhikkhus, on a mission for the welfare of humanity, for the happiness of man, out of compassion for the world and for the benefit, well being and happiness of gods and men."³ The Buddha established his order only to show the path to emancipation from suffering but also to mention social harmony. We know that during the time of the Buddha society was in a state of schism and disintegration. But after listening of the Buddha people became conscious about the Dhamma which binds man with the society. The main purpose of the Buddha's teaching was to liberate man from the bandage of suffering and creates social harmony. Nirvana is viewed as establishing inner harmony. Unless establishing inner harmony there can not be peace and progress in the society. Social harmony is the outer manifestation of inner harmony of man. Inner harmony is the core concept of Buddhism. And which is called Buddha Dhamma.

Next most important Buddhist approach to the society is the concept of Buddhishattva in Mahayana school. It means that suppose, a person who practice Dhamma, "he will be the last person who gets rid of birth and death. This type of social welfare can only be found out in the system of Buddhist religious thought. This idea itself is connected with universal compassion. A conscious effect was made to influence through Buddhist doctrine during the reign of great Indian Emperor, Ashoka. Before he was known as Chandasoka but Dhammasoka.⁴ Some historians accepted that the name of king Ashoka

is lighting just like a moon whereas other names of the world's kings similar to the stars. Asoka became a great king not because he invaded and conquered many countries but because he spread the message of Dhamma. Therefore, his mission is called Dhammavijaya.

On the basis of the above mentioned fact, undoubtedly we can say that Buddha was the first great thinker to place before mankind the ideal of social justice and human compassion. In the caste ridden society of the 6th century B.C., he revolted against the caste system and taught equality of mankind and gave equal opportunities for all to distinguish themselves in all walks of life. His teachings are, therefore, very relevant in the modern society. His path of salvation was open to all. He said in the Sutta Nipata :

"The accident of birth does not make one great or small, pure or impure, a vrishal or a Brahmana. It is action which makes one a shudra or Brahman. It is well known that Matang, the son of a Chandala attained immortal fame by virtue of his character and wisdom and many Kshatriyas and Brahmanas went to him for gaining wisdom."

In the "Ashvalayan Sutra" the Buddha declared that he looked upon all the four caste as pure. Again in the "Sundriya-Bhardvaja Sutra," he exhorted his followers not to inquire from any one his caste, but only his actions... It is self-control, truthfulness and an ethical behaviour which make a Brahman, not his birth.

One who has not committed any bad deed by body, kind and speech, one who is controlled in these three, is a Brahman."

He declared that the gates of purity and perfection were open to all, high and low, saint or criminal, who would care to cure a new leaf and aspire to perfection. Irrespective of caste, colour, rank, he established for both deserving men and women a democratically constituted holy order. The Buddhist Sangha was based on equality and democratic principles. Individual freedom of action was the keynote of his teachings. He did not force his followers to be slaves either to his teachings or to himself, but granted complete freedom of thought.

Last but not least, he was the first teacher to exhort His followers to move about the four corners of the world doing good to many, working for the welfare of many and creating a climate of goodwill, friendliness and compassion among human beings for the entire creation. While revolving the wheel of Dhamma at Sarnath, the Buddha declared in his first Sermon :

These immortal words uttered by this great Teacher of Humanity more than two thousand five hundred years ago will never be irrelevant or meaningless because they embody the Universal love and boundless compassion of this great man for the entire creation for the happiness and welfare of whom he loved and preached. His boundless compassion reached the animal world also. He persuaded some Brahmanas at Varanasi to hand over to him a lamb which they were going to sacrifice. He then caressed and comforted the lamb. He comforted the bereaved by his consoling words. He ministered to the sick that were deserted. He helped the poor that were neglected. He ennobled the lives of the deluded, purified the corrupted lives of criminals. He encouraged the feeble, united the divided, enlightened the ignorant, clarified the mystic, elevated the base and dignified the noble. Both rich and poor, saints and criminals loved him alike. Despotic and righteous kings, famous and obscure princes and nobles, generous and stingy millionaires, haughty and humble scholars, destitute paupers, down-trodden scavengers, wicked murderers despised courtesans-all were elevated and comforted by his words of wisdom and compassion.

His noble example was a source of inspiration to all. His serene and peaceful countenance was a soothing sight to the pious eyes. His message of peace, tolerance and friendliness was welcomed by all with indispensible joy and was to eternal benefit to every one who had the good fortune to hear and practise it. Whenever his teachings penetrated it left an indelible impression upon the character of the respective peoples. The cultural advancement of all the Buddhist nations was mainly due to his sublime teachings.

In the words of Late Dr. S.Radhakrishna, "The Buddha belongs to the history of the world's thought, to the general inheritance of all cultivated men,

for, judged by intellectual integrity, moral earnestness and spiritual insight, he is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history. "Mr. H.G.Wells has made the following observation on the relevance of Buddha's teachings in the modern world :

"In the Buddha you see clearly a man, simple, devout, lovely, battling for right-a vivid-human personality, not a myth. He too gave a message to mankind universal in character. Many of our best modern ideas are in close harmony with Buddha's teachings. All the miseries and discontents are due, he taught, to selfishness. Before a man can become serene, he must cease to live for his sense or himself. Buddha in different language called men to self forgetfulness 300 years before Christ. In some ways he is nearer to us and our needs."

Thus Buddhism preached the gospel of non-violence, social justice, observance of the code ethics, selfishness service and friendship among peoples for maintaining proper order and discipline. The Holy Orders always stood for fraternity, harmony and for inculcating the spirit of selfless service to the humanity, compassion and tolerance which are based on spiritual wisdom. This doctrine throws perfect light on the relevance of Buddhism in modern society.

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RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN

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The characteristics of religions in India:

1. There had been many religions in India as elsewhere.
2. Most of them are age old rather out of date. But they still influence the Indian trend.
3. The founders of all religions have been men.
4. All the founders have different opinions in many aspects but all of them have uniform teaching about the status of women (except for Buddhism). They discriminate between men and women inequality among women, and also underestimate them.

Religion and Ancient Indian Society : Religion and society are interrelated. According to the norms of Hinduism, the Indian society continued to be unjust and offensive towards women. No religion shows any sympathy with women. There are two reasons for that.

(i) Possessiveness and (ii) Ego of men due to which they underestimate women. It is an outcome of their prejudice of women. The intelligent but weak men imbibed the idea of loyalty to the husband by the wife and in the name of superiority of the family, they compelled the women to remain in the four walls of the house. At the same time they had freedom to behave freely.¹

Out of it male dominating tradition and culture continued. All religions gave boundless freedom to men and norms for women were constrained. She was exploited. The woman was to follow the sectarian norms

and she was to pass on them to the future generation. If she refused to follow or obey, she was put to harassment. She was blamed of anit-religious. No one thought of her welfare. she had no status in the family or in community. All Indians imbibed these rules and women were neglected. They created a world of suffering and opprression. Out of it many other unjust traditions began.

Hinduism and Women : According to ordains of Manu, Woman was not given any kind of freedom; Women depends on her parent at her childhood, and on her husband at the middle age and on her children at her old age, so woman did not deserve freedom². Due to that the future society refused her from every kind of freedom. She could not enjoy human rights, education, which awaken man and were refused to her. Mentally and physically she was oppressed.

“ढोल, गंवार, पशु, शुद्र नारि
है सब ताड़नके अधिकारी.”³

Manu said that a drum, animals, beast, shudras and women should always be beaten. So women was supposed to be a means of enjoyment and reproduction. She thus was thrust in slavery. So Hinduism is responsible for the degradation of the life of women⁴. The condition of the women of oppressed class was still worst.

Islam and Women : She became Pardanasin and Unilateral divorce. She cannot participate in the religious rites. She cannot enter the mosque, nor can become a priest.

Christianity and Women : There is in also inequalify among women and men.

Buddhism and Women : There is a difference in the opinion of Lord Buddha. He never discriminated between men and women. In view of the Buddha girl is superiour to boy⁵. Buddha teaches that man should treat her on human ground. There is equality in Buddhism among women and men. There is no injustice towards women in Buddhism. He had expelled injustice from Buddhism. In Buddhism there are five shilas (पञ्चसिद्धानि), Buddhist men

followers have to follow the five Shilas. The women have also to follow them. She has to do no other customary rites. Buddha respected the women. So the progress of woman was possible. She developed confidence from Budhas soft corner towards her.

Buddha teaches men that they should honour woman in their family by giving them five types of honours.⁶ Women were respected and treated equally in their families that was one of the reason of the progress of the nation⁷. She had a right of education.

In this way we see that religion and society are interrelated. Woman had to follow the teaching of religions. Religion is still prevailing over human mind. Though some of the rules have become out of date, people still do not want to giveup them. Yet Manu is influential. In Rajasthan there is a custom of Sati. In some places there is a custom to Devdasi. In Bihar the girls are killed by means of salt and urea. Oppressed class newly married girls are offered to landlords. In the last decade there has been an increase in the ill-treatment of women, beating, rape and burning of women have been rampant.⁸

The situation has become out of control because of constrand and in human treatment. The growth of mind and body is affected. Thus the women become a victim of untimely death.

Modern Society and religion : The two groups of society. (1) The conventional fellowing of the out-mode of customs and traditions. So women are underestimated.

(2) Modern Society that society should modify itself according to the changing conditions.

Society and religion are interrelated. For healthy society, religion is essential. So with the changing conditions and time, religion should also undergo a transformation.

Today society undergoes a change but the norms of religion do not. The two way of thought :

1. Not to follow the religion.

2. Follow the norms, which are useful, it not ready to fight and struggle to accept the equality between men and women

Modern Society : The place of women and the relation with religion.

Modern Society accept women as an important element of the family. Education is open equally to both boys and girls. All other needs of women are also fulfilled. She can have higher education, contest elections, she should marry only after the age of 18, she can choose her would be partner. She can earn her subsistence and live independently like men. In short a girl is not only equal but superior to a boy in many respects. Those who follow the Buddhist cult are indiscriminate and in such families the relation of men and women would be on equal footing. According to Buddhism woman is treated with five good ways and equality. So women can make her progress in all respects. Women is not helpless as Hinduism says. The thought of Hinduism that woman didnot deserve freedom is outdated today and but Buddhism who is in favour of woman's freedom is useful today.

The British rule influenced the Indian people in may ways one of that is women's education. In 19th century many social workers tried to improve the conditions of women in the society. They insisted on women's education.

The 15th article of the constitution speaks of equality among men and women. She is also a human like man. So as an individual she must make progress in building the nation. She must have a right to involve in it. She has a right of decision making and these views are accepted in modern society.

Today women can achieve anything that man can. As intellectuals, women come forward as Doctor, engineers, professors literatures. In the field of justice as advocates and judges. There are drivers, pilots and what not. Indira Gandhi is an example to impress her capability and competency. The woman who seems only as a housewife has already come out of the threshold and actually participated in all fields as equal as a man. The concept that woman is weak, she is only a means for re-production is out dated and also the religion who teaches this type.

The freedom of woman has nothing to do with that type of religions who make a woman pardansin. She has proved her calibre and ability in her house as well as in her services. She has a confidence that her woman hood does not come in the way of her progress¹⁰. This happens only by the teaching of Buddha. Therefore women can participate in politics and reservation for them is being thought out. She can use her descretion effectively. She can be a part in building a state. Buddhism teaches that if woman gets a chance she can prove her wisdom and scholarship¹¹. Due to the impact of Buddhism in modern society woman has a right to show her cleverness and that helps the progress of nation. So Buddhism is the only religion which is useful in modern age.

Hinduism that considers women to be unimportant is outdated, because the future would be the world of women in evry sense of the term.¹²

Today things are uncertain, unsafe. They threaten the mode of life. Buddhism is the answer to that. That teahes selflessness and balancing the life. The middle way (मज्झिमा पटिपदा) that Buddhism teaches is the only way to be followed and also the Vipassana the importnt feature of Buddhism today. We use to see that many young ladies and all sorts of women are doing vipassana for calm and quite life and for their progress.

Today is the age of technology, out of it springs the trend of materialisation. People amass wealth with many purposes. Woman is a friend, mother and wife of man. The teaching of Buddhism can only come to the help in achiving their progress, "life is full of sorrow, it is not etternal soulless". These ideas can help us. The woman would only show her readiness for that. Transformation of life must come out form within. But woman who are highly educated, try to imitate the western culture. They wested responsibilities, but they still stick to the useless religious rites.

Due to the impact of the religions some women believe in the existance of God. They also think that husband is also a God for them. They fast and pray for them. A son is considered to be very important to have. Without a son there would be no deliverance. So women take utmost pain for

getting a son. They follow all sorts of spiritual ways which are totally immoral and cheating. Women think a son is better than a daughter for that they undergo a loss of foetus. A girl is not welcomed in the society. People especially ladies demand dowry from the parents of a girl. A girl is the property of others. So parents give her away in charity. Thus Hinduism that possesses 33 crores of God is superstitious and follow baseless things.

Though there has been a change, Hinduism has not changed. Because of this there have been dowry-deaths, burning, suicides and acts of rapes. It is because of the teaching of Hinduism. Due to that women do not think otherways. They have no freedom. They are always dominated by men. Women have also accepted this because of the impact of Hinduism. They use to think that they are made for that only.

Freedom is not freedom in every thing. The meaning of equality and women-freedom should not be deemed on the examples of those women who behave immorally. Some women are addicted to drinking, they smoke and gamble. These are all bad according to all religions. Such behaviour of women has nothing to do with religions. Buddhism refers to the defeat of human life, an account of these bad behaviour. It also teaches to keep away from these things for the welfare of the family and society.¹³ Buddhism has given Panchsheela-five good characters. They are based on morality. There is liberty, justice and freedom. They are not based on any written material, comprise of friendship, mercy and consciousness.

In such a way Hinduism and other religions can not uplift the degrading conditions of women. Buddhism is the only answer to that. So Boddhisatta Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar embraced Buddhism on 14th Oct. 1956 with a view to achieve the total progress of women.

In todays Women's freedoms age women should follow the teaching of Buddhism that अत्ति अत्तो नाथो" Women should have selfrespect and ambition to achieve progress. Buddhism would help in achieving equality, freedom, justice and brotherhood among male and women.

In this way Buddhism is necessary for the national Integration and national development. Because of that Boddhisatta Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wished the whole India should embrace Buddhism.¹⁵

Conclusion : The criteria of the progress of any society depends on the account of the progress of women for that there is a need of "Dhamma" and no need of "Dharma". "Dhamma" would bring equality, freedom, brotherhood and justice among men and women. It is BOUDDHA DHAMMA (BUDDHISM). It only can reinsitute humanity in the society.

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THE CONCEPT OF IGNORANCE AND SUFFERING IN BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

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1. Ignorance (*avijjā*) means the lack of knowledge about the four noble truths of suffering, cause of suffering, cessation of suffering, and the pathway leading to that cessation. Ignorance is wrong assesment, based on the static view of the reality, of the values of things, and also a wrong attitude giving rise to a number of absurd metaphysical theories concerning the beginning and end of worldly existence, the existence of God as creator, and uncaused eternal entities like self and matter. Scepticism about the moral law and its purpose is also a product of ignorance. Suffering consists of the process of aging, decay and death involving lamentation, wailing, agony, and the like.

The doctrine of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, dependent origination, explains the origin of suffering from ignorance. On account of ignorance (*avijjā*) there arise conative dispositions (*saṅkhāra*); on account of conative dispositions there arises resultant consciousness (*viññāṇa*); on account of resultant consciousness there arises mind-body (*nāmarūpa*); on account of mind-body there arise six sense-organs (*saḷāyatana*); on account of six sense-organs there arises sense-impression (*phassa*); on account of sense-impression there arises feeling (*vedanā*); on account of feeling there arises craving (*taṇhā*); on account of craving there arises clinging (*upādāna*); on account of clinging there arises process of becoming (*bhava*); on account of process of becoming there arises rebirth (*jāti*); on account of rebirth there arises decay-death (*jarā-maraṇa*). This is the complete chain in its usual order which may be called positive as distinguished from the negative one wherein it is shown that on the cessation of the preceding factor the succeeding one does not arise any more,

for instance, on the cessation of ignorance there is cessation of conative dispositions, on the cessation of conative dispositions there is cessation of resultant consciousness and so on, upto on the cessation of rebirth there is cessation of decay-death, that is, suffering.¹

2. In Nyāya philosophy also we find the casual chain starting from ignorance and ending in suffering. The primal source of suffering is the ignorance about the nature of one's own self and the perverted identification of the self with the not-self. Describing the process of cessation of suffering, the *Nyāyasūtra*² says that with the cessation of ignorance the evil predispositions (called *doṣas*, defects), such as, attachment and aversion cease; with the cessation of the evil predispositions the merits and demerits (called *pravṛtti*) cease; with the cessation of merits and demerits, births and deaths cease; with the cessation of births and deaths, misery and suffering cease; with the cessation of birth, the body ceases and how can the suffering exist when the instrument of suffering, namely the body, has ceased to exist ? This absolute cessation of suffering is called *apavarga* (final emancipation) in Nyāya philosophy.

3. Jainism also regards ignorance as the root cause of suffering. On account of ignorance people are involved in worldly life consisting of the cycle of births and deaths. The wise man dives deep into the nature of worldly bondage and finds out the truth by himself. Ultimately he realises that the cultivation of friendliness and fellowfeeling is the only way that leads one out of the whirlpool of suffering.³

Attachment and aversion are the seeds of karma. Karma is due to ignorance and is the cause of births and deaths consisting in suffering.⁴

Greed, craving, ignorance and suffering represent a casual chain. The elimination of greed leads to the elimination of craving. The elimination of craving leads to the elimination of ignorance. The elimination of ignorance leads to the elimination of suffering. The elimination of greed is possible only if one succeeds in annihilating the possessive instinct.⁵

The deeper the ignorance the deeper is the suffering. The thinner the ignorance the deeper is the bliss. In other words, suffering varies directly as ignorance and inversely as wisdom; bliss varies directly as wisdom and inversely as ignorance.

4. The treatment of concepts of ignorance and suffering in the Buddhist, Nyāya and Jaina systems of thought, as detailed above, is mainly epistemological. In the Vedantic system, as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo in *The Life Divine*, it is ontological. "The Ignorance", says Sri Aurobindo, "has its roots in the nature of Mind whose office is to measure off, .limit, particularise and thereby divide.... . The particularising faculty of Mind only becomes Ignorance when it separates itself from the higher principles of which it is a power and acts not only with its characteristic tendency, but also with a tendency to exclude the rest of knowledge.... . This exclusiveness is the very soul of Ignorance".⁶ It must be noted that the Ignorance is still "a kind of knowledge, but, because it is limited, it is open at any point to the intrusion of falsehood and error."⁷ As to the suffering, it is, according to Sri Aurobindo, "a consequence of the limitation of consciousness, the restriction of force which prevents us from mastering or assimilating the touch of what is to us other-force; the result of this incapacity and disharmony is that the delight of the touch cannot be seized and it affects our sense with a reaction of discomfort or pain, a defect or excess, a discord resultant in inner or outer injury, born of division between our power of being and the power of being that meets us. Behind in our self and spirit is the All-Delight of the universal being which takes its account of the contact, a delight first in the enduring and then in the conquest of the suffering and finally in its transmutation that shall come hereafter; for pain and suffering are a perverse and contrary term of the delight of existence and they can turn into their opposite, even into the original All-Delight, *Ānanda*. This All-Delight is not present in the universal alone, but it is here secret in ourselves, as we discover when we go back from outward consciousness into the Self within us".⁸ To consider this world rather as a world of suffering than as a world of the delight of existence, is "an

exaggeration, an error of perspective. If we regard it dispassionately and with a sole view to accurate and unemotional appreciation, we shall find that the sum of pleasure of existence far exceeds the sum of the pain of existence, – appearances and individual cases to the contrary notwithstanding, – and that the active or passive, surface or underlying pleasure of existence is the normal state of nature, pain a contrary occurrence temporarily suspending or overlaying that normal state."⁹

5. The origin of ignorance and suffering cannot be attributed to any free, all-governing personal God for then God will be an immoral cruel being. The problem is difficult to answer even by considering ignorance and suffering as eternal verities without beginning and end because in that case, their elimination will be impossible of achievement. The absolute denial of their existence will be tantamount to the rejection of universal testimony of the experiences of the common man. Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of ignorance and suffering can be considered as a fresh approach to the problem. There are other approaches embodied in the different systems of philosophy, which deserve study and research by scholars interested in the subject.

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3. *jāvaṃta' vijaṃ purisā savve te dukkhasaṃbhavā |
luppaṃti bahuso mūḍhā saṃsāraṃmi aṇaṃtae ||
samikkha paṇḍie tamhā pāsajāipahe bahū |
appaṇā saccamesejjā mettiṃ bhūesu kappae ||*
(*Uttarādhyayana*, 6/1-2)
4. *rāgo ya doso vi ya kammabīyaṃ
kammaṃ ca mohappabhavaṃ vayaṃti |
kammaṃ ca jāīmaraṇassa mūlaṃ
dukkhaṃ ca jāīmaraṇaṃ vayaṃti |*
(*Uttarādhyayana*, 32/7)

5. *dukkhaṃ hayaṃ jassa na hoi moho*
moho hao jassa na hoi taṇhā |
taṇhā hayaṃ jassa na hoi loho
loho hao jassa na kiṃcaṇāṃ || (Uttarādhyayana, 32/8)

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BUDDHISTS CONCEPT OF BRAHMAVIHĀRA AND ITS RELEVANCE IN MODERN SOCIETY

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The four universal values like *mettā* 'loving-mankindness'; *karuṇā* 'compassion'; *muditā* 'sympathetic joy' and *upekkhā* 'equanimity' are the spiritual abodes in the Buddhist thoughts. These four perfect state are technically called *brahmavihāra* in the Buddhist literature. Love for the creature should be the first and the foremost quality of a human being. From love generates tolerance. Where there is real love, there must be tolerance and therefore, love in which there is no tolerance is narrow and selfish. Therefore, Buddhists think that tolerance should be the premier quality of the followers of Lord Buddha. Therefore, Achārya Buddha Ghosh, in the *Visuddhi Magga*, declares that –

Khanti paraman tapo titikhā nibbānam

paramam vadanti buddhā. (p. 263)

Thus, tolerance is the special characteristic of love. Love that flows spontaneously like a stream benefiting all who are far and near, high and low, pure and impure, is called *mahāmaitri* or *mettā*. This *mettā* is very much relevance in present society to protect the society from destruction. Lord Buddha realised this even before two thousand and five hundred years and therefore, he advised his followers to be affectionate towards the creatures. Here we have decided to say something about this vital quality of man, which is also the first compound of *brahmavihāra*, and its associate tolerance.

Bhagavan Buddha explained the teachings among his followers through the similies. Here also he says that one must cultivate in the consciousness and in the heart, the feeling with which a mother defends with her life an only son,

**viz. mātā yathā niyam puttam āyusā ekaputtamanu ākkhe/
evampisabbabhutesu manasam bhavaya apanimānam //2**

(Suttanipāta - Mettāsuttam, p.36).

Again he says - as a merchant or a householder loves an only son who is meritorious from the very core of his heart, in the same way, the compassionate Bodhisattava loves all living creatures from the very core of his heart. The Bodhisattva who is encompass with this **mahāmaitrī**, sacrifices his body, life and the very root of his good actions for the sake of the society without desire of any recompense. (The Sikkhāsamuccaya, P. 146). Therefore, the Sutta nipāta describes that as long as we live in this world we should love others and it is called the real **brahmavihāra** viz.,

**tittham caram nisinno vā sayano vā yavatassa vigatarnidoho /
atam satim adhittheyya brahmānetam vihāram idhamāhu //**

(Mettāsuttam, verse - 9, P.36)

Buddhsits not only have advised about the **Ābrahmavihāra** theoretically, but they have practised these qualities and they have also suggested the way of cultivation of the said qualities from their own experiences. According to **sāntideva**, frist of all we have to think of **maitrī** or **mettā** for the person to whom we love best. We have to thnik about his happiness, comfort and whatever good can be added to. Then we have to consider likewise for him who is next dear to us. In this process, we, gradually began to love our neighbours, fellow-villagers, neighbouring villages and then for fellow country-men. Guiding our thoughts in this manner, we will so train our mind and heart that we will begin to feel for all living things the tender affection of a father for a son.⁵ (Sikkhāsamuccaya, pp. 212-213).

Thus the great idea like **mettā** inspired thousands who dedicated their lives, not only for the suffering humanity but for all sentient beings. Buddhists who imbibed **mettā** also crossed the boundaries of India, went other countries who imbibed **mettā** also crossed the boundaries of India, went other countries and established their hospitals for both human beings and animals. It is known

from the IInd Rock Edict of Ashok that Buddhists imported medical herbs and even maintained botanical gardens for cultivation of medical plants. (Second Rock Edict : Girnar version). In the Separate Rock Edict from Kalinga, also, we have striking instances of love and tolerance for mankind viz., "all men are my children, just as in regard to my own children, desire that they may be provided with all kinds of welfare and happiness in this world and in the next, the same desire respect of all men" (Dhauli Version). This language of the Edict suggests that though Ashok was a pro-Buddhist, still he was never against of any other religion. Thus it is a remarkable fact that in the remote past tolerance, specially tolerance for other religious sects obtained its highest degree in the Buddhist culture. Tolerance among the Buddhists reached to such a extreme point that they used to forgive even those miscreants who destroy the images of Buddhas, the relics and even the good law. Santideva, therefore, rightly suggests that -

pratimā-stūpa-saddharma-nāsākārosakeṣu ca/na yuḥyate mama dveṣo buddhādīnām na hi vyathā // (Bodhicaryāvatāra, VI/96).

Now even mere remark of any single word against any particular religion invites mass agitation, but we should remember that such type of worldly utterances, the **Vaikhari vāg** which has no permanent existence, will never reach to the God or whatever it may be and religion will never be affected by these remarks. Thus the observation of the Buddhists seems to be most appropriate in the present society to avoid conflicts among the religious sects. Having realising this Buddhist believe that the worldly activities do not hurt the Buddhas or the Bodhisattvas and we should not be angry with the outragers.

As a father or a mother does not make any hurt to own mischievous children, the Buddhists also do not get angry with their enemies. They firmly believe that their unconditioned and boundless love for enemies will ultimately change them. The tolerance of the Buddhists reached the highest degree when they declare that a Bodhisattva should bear all kinds of pain and

even also the pain of their body being turn into pieces (*Sikshāsamuccaya*, P.187). Here the story of Ārya Deva may be a suitable example, which narrates that how he practised the Buddhist Brahmavihāra in his life. It is known from the chinese sources that Ārya Deva was stabbed while he was in deep meditation in a lonely forest. He advised the person who stabbed him to flee away in the guise of a monk even at the point of his death. He also offered the assailant a pair of his robes and the begging bowl. This story of Ārya deva narrates about the incomparable tolerance of a Buddhist sage who not only forgive his assailant but helped him to escape safely (Nanjio's catalogue Sl.No. 14.62; I have consulted the English translation done by S.K. Mukhopadhyaya).

A close study of the Buddhist texts suggest that the whole world has been considered as a single unit by the Buddhists. Therefore, they are not against any country, caste or religion. They think that as without the development of limbs our body will never develop; the world will never be flourished without the upliftment of each and every country, race and religious set. Śāntideva says that as we protect the hands, the feet etc. assuming them to be members of one body, we should protect all living creatures. Again he says that as the suffering of the hands, feet, the head etc. is considered by us not isolated but as integral, so the suffering of the whole world is to be considered as integral. (*Bodhicaryāvatāra*, VIII/91).

In the 3rd chapter of the work entitled the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Śāntideva declares that a Bodhisattva desires that he himself may be changed into food and drink to remove the pain of thirst and hunger of the creatures during the famine viz., (*Durbhikṣāntara Kalpeṣu bhavedyam pāna bhojanam III/82*). A Bodhisattva, further, desires to be an inexhaustible treasure for those who are poor and destitute and he himself wants to turn into all things they could need. A Bodhisattva wants to give up his body and enjoyments as well as his virtues of the free times for the sake of benefitting all. He declares that by giving up all, sorrow is transcended and his mind will realise the sorrowless state. The Bodhisattva also declares that - although they may play with the

body and make it a source of jest and blame, because I have given it up to them what is the use of holding it clear viz.,

**Kriḍantu mama kāyena hasantu vilāśantu ca /
dattastebhyo mayā kāyaścintayā kim mayānaya //**

(Bodhicaryāvatāra, III/13)

Buddhists consider that the Buddhas are seen in the form of sentient beings in the world. If one loves Buddhas he must love the sentient beings, honour them and serve them. Śāntideva thinks that Buddhists are like to helper to the helpless, a guide to the wayfarer, a boat or bridge to him who desires to cross over to the other shore. The same source also suggests that a Bodhisattva should serve like a doctor, medicine and nurse for all the sick beings in this world until everyone is treated viz.,

**glānānāmasmi bhaiṣajyam bhaveyam vaidya eva ca /
tadupasthāyakaś' caiva yāvadnogāpunarbhava //**

(Bodhicaryāvatāra, III/7)

It is also known from the same source that the enemies should be served, honoured and worshipped like the Good Law because forgiveness is the highest virtue and it leads to Buddhahood. Therefore it has been said in the Bodhicaryāvatāra that :

**dukham praveṣṭukāmasya ye kapātātvaṁāgataḥ /
buddhādhiṣṭhānata iva dveṣasteṣu Katham mama //** (VI/101)

In the suffice we would like to discuss an important spiritual discipline of the Buddhists. Buddhists belief that he, who is honoured, learned and virtuous and who possesses spotless and clear character should exchange his 'self' with one who is the most despised and degraded in the society. After such an exchange he should strive to uplift 'himself'. This is a peculiar spiritual thinking of the Buddhists, which perhaps is not seen with any other religious

sects. The following verse of Śāntideva is reflected with the said idea of the Buddhists. The verse is :

**jñātvā sadoṣamātamānam parānapi guṇodadhin /
ātmabhāvaparityāgam parādānam ca bhāvayet //**

(*Bodhicaryāvatāra*, VIII/113).

Thus the tender heart of the Bauddhācāryas was always full of compassion for the lowest and the lost. They came down from the elevated position to the ground and they lifted on their shoulders those who were in the dust. Religious tolerance of the Ācāryas was also remarkable. They practised *mettā* to give shelter to all mankind. In the present society we have no love or sympathy even for our family members. Therefore, society has been degraded. Each and every day undesired religious and caste quarrel happens in the society. Man does not hesitate to kill others for minor things. If the teachings of Buddha and his followers will be properly propagated in the society, then the unwanted things may be avoided. This the teachings of our ancient thinkers as well as the Buddhsit Brahnavihāra is fully relevant in the present society to guide the human beings to lead a correct, proper and peaceful life.

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SINGĀLOVĀDA SUTTA - A RELEVANT DOCUMENT OF HUMAN RELIGION

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Religion means human recognition of a personal God entitled to obedience or any system of faith and worship or the characteristic of any being or non-being object. So, the religion is the single one which compels the human being to be good sometime in substitute of lusture of taking birth in hell. Therefore, how long modern we are, we can't neglect the relevance of religion in our society. The Singālovāda Sutta (31st) is the picture of human religion. Though the Buddha preached it at His time but the relevance of this Sutta can't be avoided in the modern society.

Any society can't be steady without any mutual relationship between human beings in the society. So, Buddha pointed out the mutual understandings among parent, children, teacher, student, recluses, layman etc. With the fulfilling of their duties forward themselves and it has been revealed, when young Singāla paid his homage to six cardinal points viz., the east, the south, the west, the north, the nadir and the zenith, then Buddha explained the cause of worshipping these points.

At the very starting point of the sutta - When Gahapatiputta Singalaka, rising early in the morning, having come out from Rajagṛha in wet clothes and with wet hair, worshipping with his palm together the various directions, it reveals that Buddha advised to avoid all bindings of such kinds of customs and rituals in everyday life which compels a man to perform only these rituals without any requirement of the real life.

"Na kho gahapatiputta, Ariyassa vinaye evaṃ cha disā (Purattimaṃ disaṃ, dakkhiṇaṃ disaṃ, pacchimaṃ disaṃ, uttaraṃ disaṃ, heṭṭhimaṃ disaṃ, uparimaṃ disaṃ) namassitabbā ti".

It is very strange to watch that at the 6th century B.C. i.e., at the time of Buddha, who realised the perfect human religion of modern age.

"Yato kho, gahapatiputta, Ariyasāvakkassa cattāro kammakilesā pahinā honti, catuhi ca tñānehi pāpakammaṃ na karoti, cha ca bhogaṇaṃ apāyamukhāni na sevati, so evaṃ cuddosa pāpakāpagato chaddisāpaṭicchādi ubholoka vijayāya paṭipannaṃ hoti. Tassa ayañceva loke āradhho hoti paro ca loko. So kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ marana sugatim saggam lokam upapajjati." It means- Young householder, the noble disciple refrains from four acts of defilement, he does no evil which is instigated by four factors; and he does not indulge in six practices causing dissipation of wealth. Thus avoiding these fourteen evil things, he covers the six directions and follows the path for success in both the worlds. He has accomplished his tasks for this world as well as for the next. After death and dissolution of the body, he is reborn in a happy deva world.¹

These Four Acts of Defilements (Cattarakammakilesa) are killing, stealing, telling lies and committing adultery. The wise never praise them—

*"Pāṇātipāto adinñadanam, musāvādo ca vuccati,
Paradāragamananceva, nappaṣaṃsanti paṇḍitāti."*

There are four factors which are instigated these four evil acts (Catutthānaṃ) —

*Chandā dosā bhayā mohā, yo dhammam ativattati,
nihiyati yaso tassa, kālapakkheva candima.
chandā dosā bhayā mohā, yo dhammaṃ nātivattati.
āpurati yaso tassa, sukkapakkheva candima" ti.*

i.e., he who commits an evil act out of partiality, anger, fear or ignorance, his fame and following will fade away just like the moon in the waxing half of the month, whosoever does not commit evil out of partiality, anger, fear or ignorance, his fame and following will grow day by day even as the moon in the waxing half of the month¹.

Thus the Sīṅgālovāda sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya has pointed out not only the eternal morality of citizen of the 6th century B.C. but also of the modern era. Even it teaches the house-holder how to prevent the dissipation of wealth which the noble person avoided-indulgence in intoxicants which

cause inebriety and negligence (Surameraya majjapamādatthānānuyogo kho): Sauntering in streets at unseemly hours, frequenting shows and entertainments, gambling addiction, association with bad companions and habitual idleness. In one word Cha Apayamukhani.

Then Buddha leave no unturned to explain these 'Cha Apāyamukhāni' Very sharply. Such as—

1. Surāmerayassa Cha ādinavā i.e. indulgence in intoxicants which is the responsible for inebriety and negligence: Proper loss of wealth in this very life tendency to be involved in quarrels; propensity to illness and disease; loss of fame and reputation; indecent exposure of body; and impairment of intelligence.

2. Vikālacariyāya cha ādinavā-i.e. six evil consequences of sauntering in streets at unseemly hour : He himself and His children, wife i.e. whole family becomes unprotected and unguarded; his property becomes unprotected and unguarded; His propensity to commit crimes and evil deeds; he becomes subjected to false accusations. So, he will have to face many troubles.

3. Samajjābhicaraṇassa cha ādinavā-i.e. six evil consequences of Frequenting shows and entertainments : Neglecting his entire earthly responsibilities he enquires and attends the dance show, singing show, musical show etc. all type of entertainments.

4. Jūtappamādassa tha ādinavā-i.e., Six evil consequences of Gambling which is the responsible of negligene : as the winner he begets enmity, as a loser he suffers over his loosness; there is proper loss of wealth in this very life; his friends will despised him and he has not sought out his partner at all.

5. Pāpamittaiāya cha ādinavā - i.e., Six evil consequences of associating with bad companions : The Gamblers libertines, drunkards, swindlers, cheats, aggressive and violent people. People who have associated with these types of friends they are suffering here and hereafter. (Tyāssa mittā honti te sahāya).

6. *Ālasyassā cha ādinavā* - i.e., Six evil consequences of Habitual idleness : This type of people looses many chances and opportunities for their leaving of things undone saying it's too hot, too cold, too late. But who can enjoy his work in each and every situation, success is sure on his feet.

Then Buddha explained the characteristics of False and True friends what takes the important step in men's life. The identification of the false friend through the eye of Buddha –

*Aññadatthuharo hoti, appena bahumicchati,
bhayassa kiccam karoti, sevai atthakaraṇā.*

It shows that the four characteristics of false friend who pretends to be a good friend such as he only takes from one (and does not give in return); he wants much in return for giving only a little; he renders service only when he gets into trouble; he attends on one only for his own advantage.

According to Him (Buddha) –

Cattārome, gahapati putto, mitta suhadā veditabbā.

Upakāro mitto suhado veditabbo, samānasukhadukkhho mitto suhado veditabbo, atthakkhāyī mitto suhado veditabbo–

which means young householder these four should be regarded as true hearted friends : he who is helpful; he who is the same in prosperity and adversity; he who gives good counsel; and the who understands and sympathises.

Lastly, Budha explains the cause of worshipping the six directions. According to Him the parents should be looked upon as the East, the teachers as the South, Wife (and Children) as the West, Friends and associates as the North, Servants and employees as the nadir and Śrāmanas and Brahmanas as the Zenith.

Then he (Buddha) gave the detail information about these duties. Suchas -Son should minister to their parents in five ways as the Eastern side thinking that he has been supported by his parents, so he should support them in turn, he should manage affairs on their behalf; he should maintain the

honour and tradition of the family; he should make himself worthy of the inheritance and furthermore, he should offer alms on behalf of the departed parents. The parents attended upon in these five ways as the Eastern quarter by their children, look after the children in five ways : They restrain them from evil, they encourage them to do good, they give them education and professional training, they arrange suitable marriages for the children and hand over property as inheritance to them at the proper time.

Next, students minister to a teacher as the Southern quarter : by rising from the seat to greet and salute the teacher; by attending and waiting upon the teacher; by obeying the words of the teacher, by offering personal service to the teacher and by learning and receiving the teachers instructions with respectful attention. The teacher too look after their students in these five ways - to instruct the pupil well and what should he be taught; train the pupil in all arts and sciences; entrust the pupil to his friends and associates and provide for protection in every quarter. Thus the Southern quarter is covered and made safe and secure.

Then husband too minister his wife in five ways as the Western quarter: by being courteous to her and addressing her in endearing terms; by showing honour to her and not disparaging her; by being trustful, control and authority over domestic matter; by providing her with dress materials and ornaments. Wife also looked after her husband in these five ways as the Western quarter as by the husband. Such as a dutiful wife to her husband and to be hospitable, generous to kith and kin from both sides of the family; she is faithful to her husband and also be a good manager to do proper guide of the family. In one word, she is skilled and industrious in performing all the tasks. Thus the Western quarter is covered and made safe and secure.

Now, the Northern quarter is safe and secured by the man of good family who ministers his friends and associates with giving generously, being pleasant and courteous in speech, by being helpful, by treating them as he treats himself, by being true to his words and promises and his friends also do vice versa.

The Nadir is safe and secured by the master who ministers to his servants and employees by assigning the job in accordance with their ability and physical strength; by giving them food and remuneration; by looking after them in sickness; by sharing with them choice food; by granting them leave at proper times. The servants and employees also ministered the Nadir with rising before him; go to sleep after him; take only what is given, perform their duties and uphold his good name and fame.

Lastly, the Zenith is safe and secured by the man of good family who ministers to the Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas by deeds of loving kindness; by words of loving kindness; by thought of loving kindness; by keeping the house open to them; by supplying them with material needs (such as alms food). Sramaṇas and brāhmaṇas also have some duties to these noble men of good family : by restraining them from evil; exhorting him to do good, protecting him with loving kindness; teaching him (the profound matters). That he has not heard before, they explain and make it clear to him (the profound matters) which he has heard before; they explain and make clear to him (the profound matters) which he has heard before; they show him the path to the realm of the devas.

Having completed the above speech Buddha spoke that each and every relation in this world is existed with such type of responsibilities and duties to each other. Because the world demand it. If these benevolent practices viz., generosity, charitableness, pleasant speech, helpfulness to others, impartial treatment to all as to oneself as the case demands, etc. are not followed and practised by the layman then the mother will not receive any honour or respect from the children. Because the wise observed that the person who practices all of these, they reach eminence, gain praise and admiration.

Listening the sutta the Gahapatiputta Singala was excited and asked Buddha to take him as a lay disciple in the Sangha.

So, the entire observation of the Pali Siṅgalavāda Sutta of Dīghanikāya has been proved that Siṅgalovāda Sutta is the relevant document of human religion from all points of view in our human society.

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NATURE OF BUDDHA-DHAMMA

Prof. Angraj Chaudhary

Before I explain the nature of Buddha-dhamma and bring out its salient features, I would like to make a distinction between Bauddha-dhamma and Buddha-dhamma. Bauddha-dhamma, like Hindu dharma or Jain dharma seems to have a sectarian connotation. It seems to be meant exclusively for those who call themselves Buddhists and not for Hindus and Jains. Hindu dharma and Jain dharma also are meant respectively for the Hindus and Jains, not for Buddhists. Buddha-dhamma, on the contrary, does not have any such narrow and sectarian connotation. It is the dhamma taught by the Buddha. And because the dhamma taught by the Buddha is based on universal laws that operate in the moral-spiritual world, so it is universal. It is also founded on experience and reason, so it is scientific. As it is scientific and based on universal laws, so it is universal in character. All can follow it, are free to follow it and derive benefit from it.

As physical laws operate in the physical world with inexorable regularity, so there are certain laws which operate in the moral-spiritual world. As fire cannot be extinguished by fire, so enmity cannot be appeased by enmity (*Na hi verena verani sammantidha kudācana*). Fire requires water to douse it, to put it out, so enmity can be appeased only by friendliness, non-hatred (*averena sammanti*). This is law external (*eso dhammo sanantano*).¹

There is another law which operates as inexorably. If we develop negative feeling and plan to harm others, before we harm others, we are first ourselves harmed by our negative feelings. Anger that rises within us begins to burn us as soon as it rises. It causes harm to others, if at all it does, only later. Similarly cravings keep on consuming us and burning us. As soon as one craving is satiated, others rise. Things we like cause pleasant sensations in us and we want pleasant sensation to continue. But they arise only to pass away. We have more and more of cravings for them and we suffer more & more.

Similarly, things we don't like cause unpleasant sensations in us and we don't want them to continue, instead we want them to stop. But they pass away only to rise again, so, we have more and more of aversions. Here we find two laws operating. The law of Dependent Origination explains that nothing rises without a cause. Our cravings are caused by pleasant sensation (*Vedanā paccayā taṇhā*) and we suffer because pleasant sensations do not last for ever.² They are fleeting and impermanent. This is the Law of Impermanence. All conditioned things are impermanent (*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā ti*)³ and all that are impermanent cause suffering (*sabbe saṅkhārā dukkha ti*)⁴.

And what are our cravings due to ? They are due to the nature of our mind. So long as it lives in the world of desires and works out of ignorance, it is fickle and inconstant and like a monkey keeps on jumping from one object of desire to another. The Buddha made an in-depth study of the psychology of human mind and how it works. He also explained how man's immoral and unwholesome actions have three immoral roots, namely, *lobha* (craving) *doso* (aversion) and *moho* (ignorance) and his moral and wholesome actions have three moral roots, namely, *alobha*, *adoso* and *amoho*. All these laws he discovered by practising *sādhana*, by practising *Vipassanā* meditation and realising clearly at the level of experience the nature of reality. He also discovered that our mind is the spring of all actions, good or bad, that we perform. If we speak or act with an impure mind misery follows us like the wheel that dogs the hoofs of the Ox and if we speak or act with an impure mind happiness follows us like our shadow that never leaves us.⁵ In short, whatever action good or bad we perform in our life, we have to reap their results. It is clear from this that we are responsible for all that we do. No god or outside force is responsible for our actions. We can ourselves make or unmake our fortune build or unbuild it and if we like fashion it after our heart's desire.⁶

By practising *Vipassanā* meditation the Buddha developed his wisdom and knew and saw (*Jānata passafa*) these Laws at the experiential level, not only at the intellectual level. He did not learn about them by only reading

about them or contemplating about them or listening to somebody preach about them. Practice of **sāḍhanā** or Vipassanā meditation enables him to have first hand knowledge about them. Ubiquitous suffering that he saw in the world moved him deeply. This urged him to find out its cause and the **Brahmacariyā vāsa** that he took upon himself, i.e. the vow to live a life of good conduct enabled him to discover the path by walking on which, the cause of suffering could be eradicated. He propounded the four noble truths of suffering, its cause, its cessation and the noble eightfold path leading to its cessation. He explained very lucidly with the help of the Law of Dependent Origination, the cause of suffering and propounded confidently that if the causes of suffering were removed, suffering would cease to be, there would be no more suffering. But how to remove the causes of suffering ? For this he prescribed the eightfold path and said that in order to end one's suffering and attain Nibbāna - a state where there is no craving, one should walk on this path which consists of **sīla** (observation of precepts), **samādhi** (practice of meditation) and **paññā** (development of insight wisdom). It is clear from this that his philosophy is quite different from the speculative philosophies propounded by other philosophies. To Cūḷamālunkyaḥputta the Buddha had made it clear that the philosophy he propounded about the four noble truths had a direct bearing on man's existential problems of suffering and its cessation.⁷ He did not exercise his mind to puzzle out the answers to ten **abyākata** or indeterminate questions⁸ but he explained the root cause of suffering and showed the path, to eliminate it. The beauty of the Buddha's philosophy is its convergence into religion.⁹ Living a religious life helps one understand Buddha's philosophy better and the understanding of his philosophy inspires one to live a religious life. In short, philosophy and religion complement each other. This has been rather succingly shown in the **Mūla pariyaya-Sutta**.¹⁰

By practising **Sāḍhanā** (Vipassanā meditation) the Buddha observed very minutely what happened within himself. Watching his sensations arise and pass away within the framework of his body, he not only discovered the Law of Impermanence, but also discovered the three roots of immoral actions,

namely, **lobho** (craving) **doso** (aversion) and **moho** (ignorance). The Buddha rightly calls them three fires which burn us constantly. Pleasant sensations rise. We enjoy them and we want to have more of them, but they arise to pass away leaving us unsatiated and miserable. In the famous **Āditta Sutta**¹¹, the Buddha explains metaphorically the causes of our burning. He also discovered that craving and aversion are born from ignorance. If we realise that all things of the world, even beautiful things of the world are in a constant state of flux, we will not crave for them. We will grow weary of them, develop non-attachment (**nirveda**) and consequently eliminate **rāga** and **dosa**. If we eliminate them, we no longer burn, but we feel cool and quenched here and none. Our cravings (**taṇhā**) and aversion (**dosa**) manifest themselves in our actions. We steal, commit adultery in order to satiate our cravings and we kill somebody because of our hatred for him. The Buddha says that as pleasant sensations arise to pass away and unpleasant ones pass away to arise again, so it is better for us to eliminate them. For eliminating them we are required to follow certain moral precepts. If we abstain from stealing, we cut down our greed, if we abstain from committing adultery, we keep ourselves from sexual desire - a form of craving and if we abstain from killing, we eliminate our hatred or aversion, because we commit murder only when there is a great amount of hatred in us.

By observing these precepts we can purify our physical actions and if we don't tell a lie, do not make a slanderous speech, do not speak harsh words and do not talk uselessly, we can purify our vocal actions too.

Observation of such precepts forms the basis of the Dhamma taught by the Buddha. It goes a long way in planting peace in human society. Our social life cannot be happy and peaceful without observing these social ethics. One who lives an isolated life, on an island and is the monarch of all one surveys as Alexander Selkirk has described, it does not matter whether one observes. These precepts or not but as Man is a social animal his observance of these precepts is a necessary condition for living harmoniously in society without disturbing the social fabric. Much of the trouble in society is man-

made and if the members of a society strictly observe these precepts of social ethics, many of the troubles will not arise.

For maintaining peace and order in society certain Laws are made and citizens are asked to go by them, that is, obey them so that there is no disturbance and breach of peace in society. They are afraid to break the Laws, as they fear punishment. But ethical codes of conduct which bring about subtle moral and spiritual change in man are not enforced upon him. They are preached to the members of a society so that they can observe them on their own, thinking them as do's and don'ts prescribed by religion and morality. These codes of conduct, if followed rightly, cultivate our heart and enable our mind. Therefore, it can be said without any hesitation that these social ethics lay the foundation of religion. The function of religion is to enable men to live in peace and harmony. Observance of these social ethics do create a congenial atmosphere for peace and harmony to grow.

But these precepts have a deeper subtler and nobler role to play in religious life. So long as our springs of actions are craving, aversion and ignorance, we perform immoral actions and burn in their fire. More and more of cravings will arise in us, which will bind us to the wheel of existence. We will be born again and again and suffer from old age, disease and death and from sorrow and lamentation. So we have to extinguish these fires. Unless we replace greed by non-covetousness, aversion by friendliness and loving kindness, and ignorance by light and knowledge, we cannot put out these fires.

The Buddha has shown us how to go about it and how to extinguish these fires. He has mapped out a path consisting of *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā* by walking on which the three kinds of fire can be put out and positive qualities like desirelessness, friendliness (*mettā*) and wisdom can be developed. As one of the three constituents of this eightfold path is *Sīla* (moral precepts), so it is called the foundation of Buddha-dhamma, i.e. of the dhamma taught by the Buddha. Therefore it can be rightly said that the Buddha ethicized religion (dhamma).¹² In other words, observing ethical codes of conduct means living a religious life.

Thus Buddha-dhamma has direct bearing on our life here and now. Unlike other religions which promise reward and punishment for good actions and bad actions respectively in next life after death, it promises them here and now and also says that our birth in a realm of bliss or in a miserable state in next life is determined by the nature our actions performed in this life like many other religious systems, Buddha-dhamma also believes in rebirth, shaped and arbitrated by our actions.

Observance of precepts serves two functions simultaneously. It leads to the purification of our physical and vocal actions and reduces our greed and hatred. As we get rid of greed and hatred, even as we reduce and dilute them, We experience peace and coolness. We cease to burn. With our cravings and aversions reduced or rooted out. We are able to concentrate our mind which is fickle and unsteady under the pressure of cravings. Concentration of mind results in the attainment of insight wisdom which in turn equips us better to see the nature of reality more clearly. So observance of precepts by the members of a society brings peace and harmony to it and its observance by a member enables him to develop concentration of mind and attainment of knowledge. When he sees with his *Paññā* (insight wisdom) that all things, even all attractive and beautiful things are transitory, he develops non-attachment (*nirveda*) to them. This results in the complete rooting out of the roots of immoral actions, which is possible not only by an intellectual understanding of the whole process, but by walking on the eightfold path of *Sila*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā*, i.e. by living a life of good conduct (*Brahmacariyavāsa*). The path has to be developed, repeatedly developed again and again in order to eradicate the cause of suffering. In this way the highest goal of spiritual life can be achieved.

A glorious aspect of Buddha-dhamma is that it sees infinite capacity in man. For eradicating the cause of suffering, man is not required to depend upon any other force, not even upon the blessings of any god. He is his own master (*attā hi attano nātho*), he can work out his own salvation by controlling his mind (*attanā hi sudantena, nātham labhati dullabham*).¹³

The Buddha says that as man fashions his own destiny, creates his own suffering, he can very well eradicate his suffering by annihilating his cravings. Unlike some other religions which recommend their followers to placate supernatural powers which are believed to organize the material universe or to compose and sing hymns in praise of gods for their blessings or even to perform rites and rituals and animal sacrifice to appease some powers and gods, for their safety, security, prosperity and progeny, Buddha-dhamma makes man responsible for what he does and what he gets, for what he sows and what he reaps. This may be called 'Humanism' of Buddha-dhamma.

These two aspects of Buddha-dhamma—its 'humanism' and its exclusive emphasis on observance of ethical codes of conduct—have great appeal to all thinking persons to all who apply their reason, particularly to atheists. They have the satisfaction of becoming religious without being theists, without believing in the song God as Christ says of himself or without believing in the last messenger of God as Prophet Mohammad claims to be or even without going to the refuge of the God of Gods for their deliverance, as Lord Krishna says he is.¹⁵ But they see and understand that by observing precepts in life, they can purify themselves of defilements and work out their salvation themselves. They are not obliged to believe in God to whose refuge they are required to go, for their deliverance, for their liberation. The Buddha never arrogates to himself the status of God. He says time and again that he can only show the path by walking on which one can attain Nibbanā, one can be free from suffering. He cannot just deliver anybody who does not walk on the path once he said to Gaṇaka-Moggallāna that if after his instruction and advice somebody attained the supreme goal and some did not, what could he do about it. He said that a Tathāgata only shows the way.¹⁶ He cannot stand proxy for others. Tumhehi kiccamātappam akkhātāro tathāgata.¹⁷ (You yourselves must strive. The Tathagatas are only teachers. They only show the path)

In short, the dhamma taught by the Buddha is the action-plan of his philosophy and one who executes the plan is a dhammic person (a religious person) in the true sense of the word. For putting an end to suffering, its root

cause i.e. craving will have to be eradicated and one can do so by walking on the noble eightfold path of **Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā**. If one understands at the intellectual level that walking on the eightfold path can do one good, it is only intellectual understanding, not efficacious enough to bring about the desired result, but if one actually walks on the path, lives a life of good conduct (**brahmacariyavāsa**), observes precepts, practises concentration of mind, attains insight into the real nature of things, comes to understand reality as it is at the experiential level, one develops non-attachment and at the end eradicates cravings that bind one to the Wheel of Existence, and liberates oneself. For this what is absolutely necessary is 'doing', 'striving', 'working hard' and 'developing', **Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā** and the eightfold path. There is no passivity in the teachings of the Buddha. The central theme of Buddha-dhamma is 'activity'. In one of my essays¹⁸ I have listed some of the words which may be called 'action-words, achieve action words'. To the list of words given there, some more words like **ātappa** (ardour, zeal, exertion), **anuyoga** (practising), **anvāya** (experiencing) and **padhāna** (energetic effort, striving) may be added. It has been said by the Buddha that for living a **brahmacariya** life **thāma** (Stamina) **Viriya** (Vigour) and **parakkan** (endeavour) are most important. In short Buddha-dhamma is not only knowing the philosophy propounded by him, but to live it in life, to practise it in life, so that the cause of suffering is eradicated and peace is experienced in life here and now.

Buddha-dhamma is the realisation of truth, attaining it by finally experiencing in directly. Discovering truth is not enough. It is at best an intellectual exercise. What is most important is finally arriving at truth which is possible by repeating it time and again, developing it over and over again and cultivating it time and time again. Living an ethical life, a life of Virtuous conduct (**brahmacariyavāsa**) is an indispensable condition for attaining truth, for finally arriving at it. It has been briefly explained in the **Mūlapariyāya Sutta**¹⁹ that knowledge and virtue go hand in hand. Only a virtuous man, whose mind is purged of all impurities and defilements can attain knowledge and attainment of knowledge helps him to eliminate roots of immoral actions and live a pure virtuous life. He, who has destroyed craving, aversion and

ignorance is a true **jñānī** and only a true **jñānī** who has attained and realised truth can destroy **rāga, dosa & moha**. In the **Caṅki Sutta**²⁰ the Buddha speaks of preservation of truth (**saccānurakkhaṇa**), discovery of truth (**saccānubodha**) and realising truth (**saccānuppatti**). The last is the most important of the three. Truth must be known and experienced. Knowing it and experiencing it are its two indispensable parameters. Preservation of truth is possible without knowing it and seeing it, that is, without realising it at the experimental level. There are five factors responsible for preserving truth. They are faith (**Saddhā**), preference (**ruci**), oral tradition (**anussavo**), argument and evidence (**ākara-parivitakko**) and pondering a view (**ditṭhinigghānakhaṇṭi**).²¹ None of these five factors can enable one to know and realise truth, because some relief 'may will have faith placed in it, and yet it may be hollow, empty and false; and again some (relief) may have no faith placed in it, and yet it may be factual, true and no other than it seems'.²² The same can be said of other four factors.

So for discovering truth it is absolutely necessary to hear the dhamma preached by one who lives a pure life, who has destroyed, greed, hatred and ignorance, who is a man of honesty and integrity and who says what he knows and sees and does not say what he does not know and does not see.

Thus a person who hears the dhamma preached by such a man is impressed by him, develops his faith in him. He very often visits him, pays him respects to him, lends his ear to what he preaches hears the dhamma expounded by him attentively, memorizes it and investigates its meaning. Then he likes to ponder the dhamma, so zeal to do so rises in him, he becomes actively involved, he then evaluates his efforts and after evaluating them controls himself. 'When he is self-controlled, he realises with his body the ultimate truth and he sees it by penetration of it with understanding'.²² Thus he realises the truth of what the man of honesty & integrity preaches to him. This is how he discovers truth. But this is not enough. For finally arriving at truth, for experiencing it directly, he has to repeat it, develop it. So there are certain factors (**dhammas**) which help him develop it. Control, evaluation of

one's efforts, active involvement, zeal, a liking to ponder over, investigation of meaning, memorisation, hearing dhamma, lending ear, respect to teacher, paying visits to him very often and faith are such factors.²³ Each following factor is most important for the development of the preceding one, for example, control is most important for final arrival at truth, evaluation of one's effort is most important for control and so on.

It is clear from what has been said above that **saccānuppatti** (knowledge of dhamma by direct experience) is not possible without going through all these stages and all these stages speak of action, endeavour, striving and effort. The faith (**saddhā**) that has been enumerated here as a factor to help one develop dhamma is unlike the blind faith found in preservation of truth. This is born from fully understanding the honesty and integrity of the preacher of dhamma. One develops faith (**saddhā**) in him, because he says what he knows and sees, because of certain sterling virtues one finds in him and wants to cultivate those virtues oneself. But cultivating these virtues requires a lot of striving, a lot of effort on one's part. Striving for developing such virtues making a lot of efforts for cultivating them. Life of good living a conduct is dhamma. This is real dhamma in practice, a real living dhamma. **Sīla**, **Samādhi** and **Paññā** which are respectively beautiful in the beginning, the middle and the end have to be developed with zeal and ardour, with effort and exertion. The three make the dhamma taught by the Buddha complete (**Paripunṇa**) and pure (**Parisuddha**). There is nothing to add to and remove from it. There are religions which consider spiritual development as the be all and end-all of leading a religious life, so much so that a life of poverty embraced deliberately is glorified and regarded as characteristic of religion, because poverty is wrongly identified or equated with renunciation. Buddha-dhamma does not do so. Its emphasis is on an all round development. The Buddha, in fact, regarded poverty as a degrading factor. What he wanted his disciples to renounce is not wealth but greed for it. He, in fact, taught a dhamma which takes care of all aspects of our life not only moral spiritual aspect, but social and material aspects as well. This is clear from what he says

in the **Kūṭadanta Sutta**.²⁴ It is true that the Buddha did show a great concern for the spiritual well-being of man, but he did not lose sight of other aspects which, he thought, are inextricably related to spiritual development. Any religion which does not speak of planting peace and order in social life, does not at least care to secure the minimum material prosperity for people following it, how can it expect them to practise it in life? A hungry man is not only an angry man, but also a man who would care least to try to know the meaning and purpose of life in this world-which is the goal of religion. Hunger hardly inclines a man to live by the higher values of life. It is recorded in the **Dhammapada**. Atthakatha that the Buddha began to teach dhamma to a group of people only when the former who was to be the chief beneficiary that day of his dhamma-preaching came and was fed. Buddha-dhamma seems, to me, to be a full-blooded religion, if I may use this phrase in the context of religion. The Buddha did not neglect man's economic aspect. He did not glorify poverty but what he wanted was to renounce greed for wealth. He also wanted people to earn wealth by honest means. He never said like Christ that 'it is possible for a camel to enter into the eye of a needle, but not possible for a rich man to enter heaven'. We know that some of the great setṭhis of that time were his great disciples. Of course, he wanted rich persons to set apart a portion of their wealth to give it to the needy, the deserving and also to those **Samaṇas** and **brahmaṇas** who live on alms. The Pali words **sayvibhajati** (to share), **Sayvibhāga** (distribution, sharing out), **Sanvibhagṃ** (open, generous), **Sanvibhāga-danā** (distribution of gifts) bring out the Buddhas' idea of using wealth properly.

A large percentage of people are poor in the world. They have suffered so much from poverty that they feel repelled by a religion which glorifies poverty. As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar says, "to declare poverty to be a blessed state is to preserve religion, to perpetuate vice and crime, to consent, to make earth a living hell".²⁵ As Buddha-dhamma does not glorify poverty, it holds out great hopes for them. Buddha-dhamma, infact, wants all activities of man to be inspired by his ethical code of conduct, to stem from a mind purged and cleansed of impurities and defilement and also wants that all his activities should be transparent and manifest his purity and virtue. This is the real goal of religion.

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4. *Sabbe dhammā dukkhā ti, yada paññaya pasati, ibid, 278.*
5. *Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā, monosetthā manomayā*
Manasā ce paduṭṭhena bhāsati vā kroti vā,
Tato naṃ dukkhaṃ anveti, cakkaṃ vā vahato padaṃ
Tato naṃ sukkhaṃ anveti, chāyā'va anapāyine.
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dāyāda kammayoni, kammabandhu, kamma paṭisaraṇā,
Kamma satte vibhajati, yadidaṃ hinappanīṭayā ti M.N. Vol.
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17. *Tumhehi kiccamātappaṃ, akkhātā vo Tathāgatā.* D.P. 277
18. See my essay entitled "*Budhism : where Philosophy and Religion converge.* op. ct.
19. *Mūlapariyāya Sutta*, M.N., Vol. I and my essay on *The Mūlapariyāya Sutta - A Treatise of Buddhist Epistemology and Ontology.* op. cit.
20. *Coṅki Sutta* - Vol. II, V.R.I. & edition.
21. *Ibid*, p. 388.
22. *A treasury of the Buddha's Discourse from the Majjhima Nikaya*
Vol.-II. Tr. by Ven. Nyanamoli Thera, p. 196.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 391.
24. *Coṅki Sutta* Vol. II., VRI edition, p. 391.
25. See my essay on *Buddha's View of Harmony.* op. cit.

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THE BUDDHIST HERITAGE - A FUTURISTIC THOUGHT

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If religion is understood as a code of beliefs and conduct, it is a by-product of human instinct to live in groups. Religion arose some time in the dim prehistoric past as a necessary regulating and binding force and has come to stay ever since, though changing in form and content, according as faith or reason formed the principal basis of human thought and action. Many religions were born in fulfilment of social needs but only a few have survived, by virtue of their abilities to generate noble thoughts and sentiments and inspire people to found civilisations of a high order. Those having universal appeal have crossed physical and cultural barriers to spread to far-off lands. Buddhism among the world religions to today, has shown, in ample measure, creative vitality, universal appeal and inherent ability to found civilisations in distant lands. H.G. Wells has remarked that "Buddhism has done more for the advance of human civilisation and true culture, than any other influence in the chronicles of mankind".

Buddhism, born on the banks of the Ganga river, rapidly spread out to the other parts of India. In Andhradesa, which became its earliest home in South India, Buddhism secured readily popular response for the new way of life. The result was astonishing. A wholly new civilisation was born with flourishing centres of creative arts and crafts at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Goli, Ghantasala, Jaggayyapeta and Guntupalli to mention only a few. There was spread of literacy and growth of enterprise. Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, two of the celebrities in Buddhist thought and literature are supposed to have lived in Andhradesa. The people reached out to new lands far and near for purposes of trade and establishing new kingdoms. Buddhism brought about a total change of outlook on life. If, as Toynbee says, the style of a civilisation is the

expression of its religion, Buddhism unfolded itself as a creative force that inspired people to higher goals of achievement.

Buddhism entered Sri Lanka in 3rd Century B.C. as a great spiritual force at the invitation of a friendly monarch, Devanampirya Tissa, who liberally donated to the Sangha religious edifices, the most celebrated among which was the Mahavihara. An other mission reached Sri Lanka shortly afterwards carrying a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree, under the leadership of Sanghamitra, who planted the sapling at Meghavana, where the tree survives even now and established the order of nuns. Buddhism enjoyed the patronage of Duttagamani who donated many buildings to the Sangha, including the famous Lohapasada, described as a richly ornamented nine-storeyed building. At the construction of the Ruvanweli stupa, a wonderful monument, monks from different parts of India were present. When all appeared to be going well for Buddhism, sectarian dissension emerged as a counterproductive factor. The Abhayagiri monastery founded by Vattagamini, became the principal seat of schistic elements which pervaded Sri Lankan Buddhism for a long time to come leading on occasions to the persecution one or the other of the fighting factions. Nevertheless, Buddhism continued to flourish as Sri Lanka provided the home for the voluminous literary output of the great celebrity Buddhaghosa. Buddhism has been the national religion of Sri Lanka and the recognised epic centre for the transmission of the faith to South-East Asia. There can be no denying the fact that Buddhism has been a great cultural force in Sri Lanka and rallying point for Buddhists the world over.

Thailand gained Buddhism from Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The Siamese, as known previously, were a group of small principalities, under the control of Kambuja till 13th century A.D. when they shook off the foreign hegemony and founded the kingdom of Sukhothai. Sukhothai inscriptions allude to the fact that the rulers and the people were devout Buddhists, fastidious in observance of the religious festivals and ceremonies. There was reference in an inscription to a distinguished head of the Forest Monastery, who was well-versed in Tripitakas. Yunnan, Myanmar and Kambuja may have supplied the

Siamese, their own versions of Buddhism, but after establishing the Sukhothai kingdom, the Thais received religious influences principally from Sri Lanka, through Ligor (Sri Dharmaraja). In the middle of the 14th century an enlightened monarch Sri Suryavamsa Rama, invited Sangharaja, an erudite Buddhist scholar from Sri Lanka and installed a golden image of the Buddha with the fond desire of being born as a Buddha to save the humanity. Buddhism enjoyed the same prestige, even in the second Thai kingdom established with Ayuthia as the capital. The monumental edifices and images of the Buddha discovered at Sukhothai and Ayuthia, particularly at Wat Somarkot and Wat chern are a witness to the prosperity of the kingdoms. Certainly Buddhism worked for the betterment of the people and the state.

Myanmar too had a comparable experience with Buddhism. Parts of Myanmar have claims of being Buddhist in the early centuries of the Christian era, if not earlier. Buddhism did flourish in Lower Myanmar, which had been persistently in touch with South India and Sri Lanka, though at a later date it was confined to pockets near Prome and Pegu. Hinayana was the dominant faith if epigraphic and literary sources are to be believed. In upper Myanmar on the other hand was prevalent a degraded religion dominated by Aris, spirit worshippers. The reformation of society and state by Anawrata, with the help of Thera Arahant in the 11th century A.D. made Pagan the peer of Buddhism in South-East Asia. Pagan could boast of a thousand pagodas built by Anawrata and his successors. The famous among these monuments were Shwezigon pagoda and the Ananda Temple. The most renowned literary work of this period was Saddaniti Aggavamsa. But in the 13th century AD. the Ceylonese school under chapata and Sariputta assumed dominance against the local Talaing school, thus leading to conflicts between the two over the next two centuries hostilities continued between the two schools. In the middle of the 15th century, however, Dhammaceti claims to have reformed the Sangha to the standards of orthodoxy laid down by the celebrated Mahavihara of Sri Lanka. Even after the fall of Pagan, Buddhism flourished under the Shan rulers, Monks like Ariyavamsa and Silavamsa were the distinguished scholars

of the period. Subsequent to the downfall of the Shans too, Buddhism continued to enjoy the prestigious position, more so during the times of Bayin Naung, Alompra, Bodopaya and Mindon-min. But the crowning event in the history of Burmese Buddhism was the convention of the fifth Sangiti by Mindon-Min from 1868 to 1871. As a fitting celebration of the occasion, a lavish construction of 450 pagodas was undertaken for the purpose of inscribing the Tripitaka. It is clear that Buddhism was the creative force in the history of Myanmar and shaped the life-style, customs, manners arts and crafts of the people.

These are only a few examples to show that Buddhism worked for awakening the total personality of the individual and the society. It was an awakening evident by creativity in all walks of life. Speaking of Buddhism in Japan, Chamberlain writes "Buddhism introduced art, introduced medicine, moulded the folklore of the country, created the dramatic poetry, deeply influenced politics and 1/2 every sphere of social and intellectual activity. In a word Buddhism was the teacher under whose influence, the Japanese nation grow up". The same must be said of all the countries wherever Buddhism spread to.

Buddhism does not endorse the dichotomy of the spiritual and the material, but on the other hand upholds an integrated approach to life. The Bhikshus are required to confirm to the discipline of the Sangha, where as the laymen are supposed to lead a normal life, avoiding the extremes of spiritualism and materialism, but tempered by both. This message, more than anything else, is the heritage of Buddhism. The welfare of the individual and the society are the supreme concern of Buddhist. The Noble Eightfold Path of Sila, Samadhi and Prajna, is a practical code to cultivate harmony and enlightenment.

Our modern civilisation is based on science and democracy, wherein religion has no role. Science and democracy have become the catch-words of the present day. Science theoretically is supposed to provide economic

prosperity and democracy, a way of life based on majority opinion. But in practice, science led to power concentration and democracy to corrupt rule by a powerful minority. Science and democracy more often misused than not, have developed social imbalances and in turn warring factions. There is an ever increasing greed for power and material gains. The disaffected majority survive with the help of their innate resilience against adversity, differently expressed as silent resignation or as hope for the arrival of a saviour. But if the measure of resilience is tried beyond limits, the results would be catastrophic for the entire humanity. Here arises the need for resurrection of religion as a motivating force to establish peace and harmony.

Religions in general preach either self-surrender to a personal deity or faith in an abstract phenomenon. Self-surrender should be distasteful to the reigning egoism of today whereas cultivation of faith in abstraction would be too much of intellectual exercise. But Buddhism is a different religion demanding neither of them. It asks us to cultivate Sila, virtue, defined as right speech (samma vaca), right action (samma Kammanta) and right livelihood (samma a riva), in our social relationships. Sila leads to Samadhi (concentration) and in turn to Prajna (wisdom). Buddhism, being a religion established on these rational principles should appeal to the present day mind cultivated by science and democracy. And Buddhism, on its part, has institutions functioning truly on democratic principles, though born anciently in a monarchic oligarchic sets-up and therefore should find the democratic world of today a congenial home. The often quoted conversation between Ananda and the Buddha "as long as the vajjians meet in concord, disperse in concord and carry on their affairs in concord, they may be expected to prosper and not decline" (D-ii 74)., is an illustration of the love of the Buddha for democratic institutions. The obligation Buddhism is brought to bear upon in the interest of humanity is clear enough "go now and wander for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the gain, welfare and happiness of gods and men. proclaim the life of purity, the holy life,

consummate and pure. There are beings with a little dust in their eyes who will be lost through not hearing the Dharma, there are beings who will understand the Dhamma... "(Vin I Mahavagga).

Buddhism in its obligatory role of creating a New Society needs to have a theoretical model to fall upon. The model New Society should be one guided by the precepts of virtue enunciated in the Noble Eightfold Path and should be one wherein there does not exist dichotomy of spiritual and material life and wherein one is at peace with one self, with fellow-beings and with the natural environment. It is in other words a Buddhist society at once traditional and modern. A near approximation to this hypothetical futuristic model of society appears to now function in Japan. In the words of Toynbee "The Japanese have mastered modern western technology without having lost their indigenous religious tradition. This tradition offers the right spiritual antidote to modern technology's pollution of non-human nature and dehumanisation of human life. The Japanese tradition stands for the dignity of non-human nature as well as for the dignity of man".

It is such a society based on humanism and realism that Buddhism should strive to establish. But here is a word of warning against factionism which Buddhism has been prone to throughout its history. Factional quarrels mainly were the undoing of Buddhism in the land of its origin. It is necessary to realise that there is one Buddha Dharma, the one preached by the Buddha, inspite of variations in interpreting the same. Accepting that there is one Buddhism, a East Asian society should be able to pave a model for the futuristic 'Brave New World'.



RELIGION : A REGULATIVE FACTOR IN LIFE

C.S. Prasad

Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda

Religion opiates people. It is the view strongly voiced in Communism. Without Dharma man is like an animal (*Dharmena hinā paśubhi samānā*) is the opposite view applauded since days of yore in the Hindu Śāstras. The term Dharma has wider connotation than the term religion denoting Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, et al.

Man is a rational being. The rationality in him is an unique equality of due exercise of reason. He thinks, thinks of good and bad, plans and produces accordingly. He is also a social being. Living together in a society he has developed a concept of ideal life and a body of principles to uphold it. His ideal and principles work behind all his activities, economic, socio-political, religio-cultural and others. All his activities except religio-cultural attend to his temporal needs, whereas religio-cultural activities take care of his temporal as well as spiritual needs and aspirations.

The graph of economic or socio-political situation changes fast in ratio of changes in modes of production, and with it changes the attitude and appreciation of individual and society. Not even a century before when Communism was born, its appreciators abhorred freemarket economy and the world witnessed polarisation into two dreaded blocks of Capitalist countries and Communist countries led by USA and USSR, and drooping into constant fear of nuclear holocaust. But with the disintegration of USSR due to failure particularly on economic front and the consequent end of cold war, the Communist countries, too, are opting to free market economy. Socio-political situation has also undergone a sea change. The tone of apartheid has calmed down, thanks to South Africa and her leaders who faught against it and fulfilled the task started there by the Mahatma Gandhi. We in India are now not so

given to untouchability as we have been before the Father of the Nation took up the cause of untouchables. But we are becoming more conscious of caste distinction because harnessing the caste strength one may assure one's unassailable position in the society and in the corridor of power. The shape of alignment in a society or in a country or among the countries of the world is changing. Yesterday's enemy is a friend today. What makes one take side to this or that is the change in equation of economic strength, muscle powers, closeness in ideology, individual's own interest, and so on.

Religio-cultural activities differ from all other activities, whether economic or socio-political or others, because the affiliation to a religion is permanent, not changing like the change in other conditions. It is rooted in faith of people and not motivated by return. There is there no distinction of rich or poor, powerful or weak, scholar or illiterate. They all have the same Supreme Being/God Almighty and his manifestation into lesser gods as 'hallmark of their religion.' They worship them in good days to show their appreciation and gratitude for what they have by His grace, and in adverse times to propitiate and win favour in getting out of mires. It is the unwavering unflinching faith and devotion in Him and will to serve Him that hold them together in joy and sorrow.

A religion has its source in the Sacred Words of its propounder like the Buddha and the Mahavira, its prophet like Christ and Mohammad Saheb, its seers as in the Sanatana religion like Hinduism. The scriptures of a religion prescribe ethical-moral codes of conduct. 'Its moral aspects and all duties are divine commandments,' says Sammanuel Kant. Following these codes a person differentiates sacred from profane, right from wrong, good from not-good, and does right things, straightens his conduct and becomes chaste and purified in thought, speech and action. His life is harmonised and smooth sailing. He does not follow these moral codes under duress of punishment from the State. Inspiration comes from within. The very believe in efficacy of Karma, as he sows so he reaps, directs him to live in accordance with ethical-moral dictates. Knowing that his present life is the result of his past actions,

he corrects the course of actions in order to better his lot in future. Weal and woe are the retribution of good and bad actions respectively. There is no escape from retribution of Karma even in death.

A morally chaste and holy man may go higher and higher in his religious life, if he aspires for higher spiritual achievements. This he does by harnessing his inner power through concentration and devotion and by gradually purifying his knowledge. The higher he goes the better he understands the nature of the Supreme being/Absolute or Ultimate Truth and the creation, his own being in relation to Him/It and things of the creation. When the perfect wisdom is attained he becomes free from worldly bondage. The state is called differently as the summum bonum of life, salvation, union with the Brahma, Nirvana. In this state he becomes an apostle of love and compassion given to the service of all beings with equanimity, extended to the universe at large. Here his thirst for knowledge of truth/divine is a part from the category of philosophy and science is quenched.

A religion is not only to be lived by individuals separately but also by the community as a body. The spiritual upliftment of an individual ameliorates the state of community and the community in turn provides fertile ground for cultivating all his virtues. Celebrations on occasions from birth to death, festivals and festivities, worships and prayers bring together people of the community in all submission to the Almighty and with emotional attachment among themselves.

'No aspect of human experience has left so indelible mark on man's total endowment as his religion.' Religion is an universal phenomenon, the very condition of noble life, the very essence of noble life. But due to time and place some of religious practices or points of view become stale, incongruous, stumbling block in smooth running of the society. The situation created by orthodoxly treating everything of religion as divine and stubbornly sticking to them necessitates in the long run an emergence of reformers, propounders. The Buddha and the Mahavira are the product of such a situation. They brought reforms in the Brahmanical society in which they were born and

brought up. But their reforms particularly in philosophical ideas became systems unto themselves and were recognised as separate religions, Buddhism and Jainism. Sikhism was born in the same way from Hinduism only five hundred years ago. In modern times, too, Hinduism witnessed many reform movements led by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and others. Reforms rejuvenate a religion.

Religion as the very essence of noble life is universal perpetual. It may go down with the society itself to oblivion, but its essence in the shape of ideas never dies. The conception of Yati of the Harappan civilisation and culture remained dormant even after the destruction of it and found its expression in the Sramana culture and religion of Buddhism and Jainism. History has witnessed that under certain motivations a religion was relegated suppressed, but unsuccessfully. In Communism a religion was called opium and abhorred, but once the ideology lost its grip over its followers, especially after the disintegration of USSR, the people of erstwhile Communist countries are professing to their old religion. Even in India a hard core Communist is not generally seen averse to religious affiliation in person life. How can he be when he is the product of religion and culture in which he was born. Religious sentiments can shunned under compulsion, but as soon as compulsion is gone, it springs up with new vigour and force. In the year 574 the emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty of China proscribed Buddhism and asked for persecution in favour of Confucianism and Taoism. All the temples and stupas over 40 thousand were destroyed and appropriated. Monks and nuns over 3 million were returned to laylife. But the belief in and sentimental attachment of Buddhism could not be erased from their mind and replaced by another one. In the immediately succeeding Sui and Tang dynasties (A.D. 581-618-907) the cloud of darkness cleared and it not only regained its earlier state but also developed further in subtlety of thought and niceties of refinement. It was established as one the three religion of China, other two being Confucianism and Taoism. The credit goes to the Chinese intelligentsia.

Before the Second World War in Japan, Religions particularly Buddhism was chained and the native religion Shintoism was regimented as a mechanism of thought control in order to make it subservient to totalitarian and militaristic end. But after the War once the freedom of religion was restored, the suppressed religious sentiment and aspiration got a let out. The old religious organisations began to take their roles. Like frogs in rainy season new religious organisations were born, some started as break-away groups, some were brand new, some were of clergy and some were of laymen. The state of their coming up has been called the rush hour of the gods. It may seem aspersion on them but in actuality they worked wonder in rebuilding the devastated country. They did so by reaching morally down and physically shattered families. They organised them under their banner in the name of Buddha. They aroused faith in them, pushed up their moral, joined hands in sorting out their problems and ways to overcome them. Soon Japan regained and moved up on the road of opulence. She is now among G-7 of the world.

Afluent life demands greater involvement in worldly affairs which in turn steal into the harmony and peace of life, call upon the harmonious social relation and bring about the problems of alienation, inner discord, excessive givenness to self-interests, so on so forth. But there is no question of going back to the life of penury, dismantling what has been built with arduous persistent endeavours. Man must live religiously with all his riches, amenities and modern ways. Buddhist organisations have been trying to achieve this goal by bringing people together in the service of the Buddha. They are roped in community works at the organisational institutions, in festivities like new year celebration, obon dance, in places like play ground, theatre, etc. They meet regularly in Hoza (religious sitting) which is not confine to talking about religious matters, but also discussing day today's affairs like education of children, correcting delinquent children, bringing back deviating espouse, etc. With the material prosperity of people, the religious organisations have reached the state of plenty and borne all signs of modernity. They have extended their activities abroad. In India are the efforts on their part to return what they received from India through China and Korea ? How far they will

succeed in arousing interests in Buddhism and influencing the religious life of people is yet to be seen. However their works for the developments of Buddhist circuits have made people conscious of their Buddhist heritage.

In the world at large and India in particular, religions seem to have failed us today. Alignments are being made in the name of religion, religious sentiments are aroused in fighting for non-religious cause, facts are interpreted with religious bias, insensitivity to religious sentiments of others is getting more coarse. Fear of retribution of bad karma, sensitivity to what others think, sense of shame, etc. have receded to bottom level. Acquisition of riches, degree, position through any means is appreciable. It is not the means but the result that matters. This way of seeing things is the order of the day. Undue emphasis on scientific knowledge, appreciation for material prosperity, questionable conduct of the keepers of religious conscience, etc. have disillusioned many. Interest in religious activities is reducing.

This state of affairs is not due to some intrinsic defects in religion itself. Defect is with us. We are failing religion. We are deviating from religion. Religion is a way to noble life. Its ethical rules restrain and harness the life. One leading a regulated life is no obstruction to others. From individual, the society gets better. There is no discipline that can replace religion even pure ethical codes of conduct bereft of religious fervor. History is a witness that the high ethical codes of conducts and neatly woven social philosophy of Confucianism backed by Confucius elite and bureaucracy supervising their implementation, true to word, could not help people incline to Buddhism. Chinese civilization and culture was transplanted in toto in the Japanese soil, but of them Buddhism religion per se became their faith and ever since have been giving them a consummate taste of spiritual life.

Religion is a must in life. Life without it is unthreaded beads. A true religious is one who professes one and gives respect to others. In today's world when life is getting more and more untuned, religion is needed more urgently.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF AHIMŚĀ IN PRESENT SOCIETY : A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE

Dr. (Ms.) Swati Ganguly

Standing at the threshold of the twenty-first century, human race may feel proud of its wonderful achievements in terms of gaining power and status through material prosperity. However, the glorious march of world civilisation seems to have come to a halt because of world-wide conflicts and violences spreading like a fire all over, thereby causing a great concern for the survival of man. On the other hand, the majority of the society throughout the world is still suffering with burning problems like poverty, starvation, ill-health, ignorance, negligence to the helpless, injustice, inequality and interference. Industrialisation and commercialisation have come in the way between nature and man hampering the ecological balance with environmental pollution. Can a modern individual or society find some way out to pacify this painful and decaying conditions of the earth ?

The history of mankind has witnessed the efficacy of the moral culture for guiding and saving the ailing world through realisation of the unity of all in terms of attaining freedom from all bondages with an awakened mind. Ahimsā (non-injury, non-killing) is such a moral principle propagated by various religious traditions inculcating a positive value of continued fellow-feeling towards all living being and thus promoting various social welfare activities through mutual understanding and co-operation. From the Buddhist standpoint, Ahimsā primarily refers to a state of mind manifested in love for life and protection of life. When extended to the each and every member of human and natural existence, the spirit of Ahimsā brings out peace, harmony, equality and integrity among all kinds of diversity. The present paper will briefly discuss the aspects of Ahimsā as conceived and applied by the Buddhist tradition in India, China and Japan.

The word 'Ahiṃsā' : 'Ahiṃsā' is a combination of a (negative prefix) + **himsā** (derivative from root **han**) meaning 'not killing, not injuring' (in Chinese, **pu-sha-sheng**, 'not to kill living beings', or **pu-hai**, 'not to injure'). The equivalents of **Ahiṃsā** are **avihiṃsā** or **avihesā** sometimes translated into English as 'Harmfulness', 'non-violence', 'absence of cruelty'. In the **Saṃyutta Nikāya**, the Buddha explained that **Ahiṃsā** is abstaining from harming others in deed, word and thought.

Ahiṃsā as śīla (moral conduct) : In early Buddhism, **Ahiṃsā** arises with the practice of the first of the five moral conducts (**pañcasīlā**) prescribed by the Buddha for laity, which reads as **pāṇatipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ** (precept of abstaining from injuring lives). The Buddha criticised the Vedic sacrifices of animals and his first injunction reveals his opposition to destruction of life. Precept of non-killing is also included in the eight precepts practised on four fast (**uposatha**) days of the month observed by the Buddhists. It is also the first precept (**śīla**) of the ten precepts to be observed by **sāmaṇera** and **sāmaṇerī**. Non-killing is detailed in the **Vinaya**. The third precept of **pārājika** prohibits killing of human being.

Practice of Ahiṃsā : **Ahiṃsā** is to be practiced with a common sense approach. Since living beings love their own lives and do not want to get hurt, they should not wish to injure others. It is also the feeling of shame for the cruelty connected with killing that compassion and love to all living beings should be practised (cf, **Sāmaññyaphala sutta**). However, **Ahiṃsā** in action is difficult to practice in everyday life, as by one way or the other, we are bound to injure each other to some extent. In Buddhism, recognition to life is emphasized.

Ahiṃsā and magga (the Path) : Practice of **Ahiṃsā** in a religious sense, is considered a part of the Holy Path leading to enlightenment. **Sammāsankappa** (Right Thought), the second factor of the Eightfold path constitutes **avihiṃsā - vitakka** (thought free from cruelty). **Sammākammanta** (Right Action) is considered as **Ahiṃsā** (**Majjhima Nikāya III, p. 251**).

Among the ten good steps (*kusala patha*), the first step is not killing living beings (*Dīgha Nikāya* III, p. 269).

Ahiṃsā as dhātu (element) : *Ahiṃsā* is considered as *avihesādhātu* (element of Harmlessness) referring to an 'elementary quality of noble thought' (*Dhammapada*, 225, 261 etc.).

Ahiṃsā as caitasika dharma : In the *Vijñaptimātratātriṃśikā* (verse 11) belonging to the *Yogācāra* school of Buddhism, *Ahiṃsā* or *avihiṃsā* is one of the good mental quality in the sense of *avihaṭhanā* (not causing injury) to other sentient beings (*sattva*) through killing, capturing (*badhabandhanādibhiḥ*). In other words, *Ahiṃsā* is compassion to sentient beings (*sattveṣu karuṇā*). *Dharmapāla* in his commentary to the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (available in Chinese only) identifies the nature of *Ahiṃsā* as *adveṣa* (non-anger, *pu-chen*) that "does not cause injury and suffering to the sentient beings, and gives *maitrī* (friendliness) which in turn is 'actualised into non-injury' with the development of *karuṇā* or compassion" (see *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun*, *Taishō* 31, p. 30b). In the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition of Buddhism, *Ahiṃsā* is considered as an independent good mental quality (*Chu-she-lun*, *Taishō* 29, p. 19b).

Manifestation of Ahiṃsā : *Mahāyāna* Buddhism promotes the spirit of *Ahiṃsā* with its concept of Buddha-nature of all beings. Meat-eating is prohibited with the recognition of the potential Buddhahood of all beings. Thus 'extinguishment of the seed of Buddhahood of great compassion' is feared through meat-eating (see *Fan-wang-ching*, *Taishō* 24, p. 1004 p.). The *Laṅkāvatāra* says - 'The Bodhisattvas who seek the enlightenment of the Buddha, how can eat the flesh of various living beings ?' (p. 425). Among the ten *pāramitās* or perfections to be practised by the *Bodhisattva*, charity (*dāna*) is the first and the greatest charity is to give life to another.

Love and protection of animals is detailed in various stories in the *Mahāyānasūtras*, specially in the story of *Mahāvīra*, of *Śivi* etc. who sacrificed their lives to the animals in the *Suvarṇa-prabhā-sottamsūtra*.

Respect to freedom of all living beings is shown by the practice of 'liberation of life' which is recommended in the 20th Chapter of Fan-wang-ching. The spirit of Ahimsā is to be nurtured by the king through various measures like prohibition of slaughter, hunting etc., provision of food and shelter to the poor and of medicine to the sick, protection of people from the criminals and outside invasions, punishment of the guilty people with compassion like not giving death sentence to serious criminals (details in the *Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra*, the *Suvarṇaprabhasottamasūtra*, the *Mahārājakanikālekha* etc.). That these were actually practised in India, is evident from the travels of Fa-hsien and Hsuan - tsang.

Practice of Ahimsā by King Aśoke of India is known from his edicts. Edict 2 of fourteen Rock Edicts mentions that the king built hospitals for men and animals, cultivated medicinal herbs, and dug well for use of men and beasts. Again the fifth of the Pillar Edicts lists protection to all kinds of animals including pregnant and not yet full-grown animals, restriction of buying, selling, injuring or killing them in special days of religious observance.

Ahimsā in China and Japan : Mahāyāna Buddhism became influential in China and Japan as a result of which the spirit and practice of Ahimsā were manifested there in almost every aspects of life-political, social, religious and intellectual. In China, meat-eating, drinking of liquor, slaughtering and even use of fish nets were prohibited through imperial order by Empress Wu of Liang in 511 A.D. The ceremony of 'liberation of life' became very popular. The preaching by Chih - i (538-597), the third patriarch of the 'T'ien-t'ai' school of Chinese Buddhism is said to have influenced the fisherman to give up fishing at 63 places in the rivers which were turned into 'Pools of the Dharma'. In Japan, death sentence was prohibited for 200 years (from the ninth to the eleventh century). Cultivation of Ahimsā promoted various welfare activities like providing medicines and opening clinics and hospitals for the sick and the injured, building homes and providing food for the poor and the dying belonging to both the monk and the communities, specially during the regimes of Empress Wu (684-704) of China, of Prince

Shotoku (574-621 A.D.) and Empress Komyo (702-60 A.D.) of Japan (details in *The Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol. I, Fascicle I, p. 291-92).

In China, the *Mahāyāna* concept of charity that heads the list of the ten *pāramitās* (perfection) to be practised by the *Bodhisattva*, made the needy people to be considered as 'field of compassion' (*pei-t' ien*) who were to be offered gifts along with the 'field of respect (*ching-t'ien*). Of the two fields the 'field of compassion' referring to 'the poor and the needy, the orphaned, the aged, and even the ant' was declared the superior one. Again, seven types of activities constituted the field of merits (*kung-te-t'ien*), which are construction of *stūpas*, monastic halls and pavillions; establishment of fruit gardens, bathing tanks, and trees; dispensing medicine for sick; construction of sturdy boats to ferry people; construction of bridges; digging of wells along well-travelled roads; construction of toilet facilities for the convenience of the public. Excepting the first, all other refer to the Buddhist social welfare scheme.

The Buddhist monks in China established hospitals and practised medicine to help the sick and the ailing persons. We may refer to An Shih-kao (2nd century), Fo-t'u-teng (4th century), Buddhayaśas (5th century), etc. Ssu-miao (7th century), a famous Taoist physician who was interested in Buddhist medicine, aptly express medical ethics which is based on the spirit of *Ahimsā* - 'A great doctor in treating maladies should pacify his spirits and allay his ambitions, so that he is without desire or seeking. He should first develop such great love and compassion that he should yearn to alleviate the miseries of sentient beings.' It is needless to say that this is the highest of the medical ethics of all times.

Some of the schools of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism particularly illustrated the concepts of equality and harmony of all beings based on the ideals of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Among the Buddhist schools of China, the *T'ien-t'ai* or the Lotus school propagates the theory of the harmonious Threefold Truth, i.e., Emptiness, Temporariness and the Mean which involve

one another so that one is three and three is one, thus affirming the essential unity of the relative and the absolute. The temporary world constitutes of different realms which are arranged in a hierarchical order, and are so interwoven and interpenetrated that they are considered as realised in a single thought moment. The one is All and All is One (yi yi ch'ieh yi chieh yi) philosophy of the T'ien-t'ai asserts the presence of Buddha-nature in all beings. The school believes in 'One vehicle' or 'Buddha vehicle' which carries all beings to their final goal, implying the equality of all in terms of attaining liberation.

The Hua-yen (Japanese Kegon, Sanskrit Avatamsaka) school propounds the theory of universal causation by Dharmadhātu, the ultimate reality. The universe is manifestation of one great Mind (ekacittāntargata dharmaloka) and hence there is no distinction between the reality and the phenomena. The Hua-yen concept of the universe as 'universally co-relative, interdependent and mutually originating, the dependence being interdependent and mutually originating, the dependence being both temporal and spatial' presents an ideal world-view in which facts are interwoven in perfect harmony by mutual penetration and mutual identification. 'The harmony of all beings having the perfectly enlightened Buddha as the centre' points out to the immanence of Buddha-nature in every being forming the totality of existence. There is no distinction between the animate and the inanimate beings.

The Pure Land (Ching-t'u) School propagates salvation of all by faith in the saving power of the Buddha while the Ch'an (Japanese Zen) school teaches 'becoming a Buddha just as you are' with the assertion that Buddha-nature is inherent in all human beings and that can be seen 'directly pointing to the human mind' by meditation.

The tendency of syncretism characterised with the ideal of universal salvation and the world-view of totality continued to appeal to the Chinese mind during social and religious changes after the deinstitutionalisation of Buddhism in China.

In Japan, the counterparts of the above schools flourished and left long-lasting influence in various aspects of Japanese life.

Education and Social welfare programmes were stressed by the great Buddhist master Saicho (767-822) who wanted monks to be teachers, administrators, and technicians for repairing ponds and canals, construction of bridges and ships, digging of wells etc. Genshin (942-1017) used ethical ideas like non-killing of living beings as subjects of painting and sculpture and promoted art as a medium of instruction. Another Pure Land teacher Ippen (1239-1289) speaks of promoting 'sense of equality', awakening 'sense of compassion', not forgetting 'suffering of others' and other moral ideals.

Ahimsā in present society : The historical role of Ahimsā in the Buddhist tradition has earlier been discussed. The message of compassion, humanity and equality inspired by the spirit and practice of Ahimsā is of no less significance in the context of the present society which is facing countless problems regarding differences with respect to region, caste, creed, religion, language, status and aspirations. For lack of total freedom in their enterprises imposed by the separatist factors, men are being deprived of developing sound body and mind to cope up with modern problems. Ahimsā enables individuals to widen their world-view by loving and caring other beings, thereby promoting tolerance and harmony. It further enhances the spirit of co-existence and co-operation among various groups for launching common welfare programmes to serve humanity as a whole. The world of Ahimsā includes the protection of environment that 'nurtures' and 'enriches' men and animal world. The suggestion by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, of the 'universal responsibility' to save the planet from environmental pollution is meaningful only with the extended feeling of Ahimsā. Again, technological development is to be integrated with sympathy for removal of social and economic backwardness. It is the lofty ideal of Ahimsā in Buddhism that has brought forth the ideas of human rights and democracy in modern times. The holistic concepts of 'All in One, One in All', 'interdependence of the realms of the universe' implied by Ahimsā may still contribute to the twenty first century vision of harmony and freedom in the societal order.

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ASCETICISM AS A CREED FOR HUMANITY

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The institution of asceticism takes its cue from the renunciation of worldly desires. The chief idea behind the ascetic attitude is that what is material and empirical is inherently evil and the spiritual element is alone good and beneficial. So, disillusionment and disgust with the state of the physical world forms the core of the ascetic way of life. In the ascetic practice, the worldly life is sought to be negated and an attitude of complete non-attachment is developed so that desires for sensual pleasure, is stopped and the source of misery is nipped. Thus, an ascetic renounces the world from the religious motive of spiritual elevation.

The ascetics have a long history in India. In the Rgveda, The Vātarasanā Munis, the earliest dissenters from the orthodox Vedic religion who relinquished hearth and home and lived by begging represent the oldest form of the sramanic ascetic tradition which later assumed many non-Vedic forms such as Buddhist and the Jaina.

The essence of Brahmanical asceticism lies in abnegation of selfish desires and inclinations by practising self-control and submission to the Almighty God. For the Buddha, ethical enlightenment alone and not a course of painful penance was required to attain nibbāna. Mahavira on the other hand chose the life of rigorous austerities and hardships to attain salvation.

In the case of the Brahmanical asceticism the emphasis is laid upon overcoming of desires in order to achieve the identification of soul with Brahman. In Buddhism *tanhā* is sought to be curbed to achieve nibbāna. In Jain Asceticism we find intense emphasis on the internal purity by annihilating the Karmic body to free the soul from the worldly bondage. All however aim at the single goal of the achievement of liberation from the cycle of birth

and death, though in their own ways but renunciation or deserelessness is commonly considered a must for the said release.

Desirelessness is achieved by removal of ignorance and dawn of true knowledge. They all therefore lay emphasis in getting rid of ignorance. They also stress upon individual effort which can definitely turn the destiny of man to good. In Brahmanism, the Vedantic ideal of 'Tattvamasi' tends to often the asectic ideal of complete renunciation. Liberation is attained according to the Upanisadic teaching by knowledge of the absolute reality, the Brahma. In Buddhism, the philosophy of 'Sarvan Anātmam' became the basis of all scheme of spiritual development. For Buddha, Knowledge of the Dhamma is essential for nibbāna. The Jain asceticism is the logical consequence of its theory of Karma. Spiritual redemption according to it lies in the restoration of the infinite potencies of the Jiva by destroying the Karma-pudgala through self-mortification. The jain consider right conation, cognition and conduct as the path to liberation.

The Brahmanical asceticism for reason of its antiquity and authority exercised much influence upon the Buddhist and Jain ascetics' ideals and practices. For example, the Panca-sheel of the Buddhists and the Panca-mahāvratas of the jains have their source in the Dasa-dharmas of the Brahmanical asectics.

The customs pertaining to the ascetic mode of life are important only as a means for spiritual discipline. Asceticism primarily consists in renunciation and not so much in the outward marks of the ascetics. Outward marks become useful only when they are coupled with ascetic motive proper.

Renunciation again has to be resorted to with a view to fulfilling the social obligations devolved upon a man as a rational social being. The ascetic seeks the salvation not only of himself but also of the whole mankind. Indian asceticism marks a revolt against the parochial and malifie tendencies engulfing the human society. It is meant for the upliftment and welfare of all without any distinction and is never the exclusive prerogative of only a few.

In the present day situation unless the practice of renunciation is promoted and encouraged, humanity will remain under the constant threat of annihilation created by the materialistic & consumerist culture engulfing the society.

The ascetics today owe the graver responsibility of meeting the rising threat of the ominous ascetic culture surfacing at present and turn mathas and monasteries into centres of dissemination of asectic ideals of universal brotherhood and spiritual fellowship through practising and propagating the ascetic means of renunciation.



UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

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The theme of the XXII Conference of the International Buddhist Conference held annually is Relevance of Buddhism and other Religions in Modern Society. One common topic which all the religions preach is Universal Brotherhood and I will limit my discussion to the Buddhist perspective of Universal Brotherhood which is in conformity with the theme to be discussed.

Universal Brotherhood according to my thinking does not mean brotherhood or unity towards or with the countries of the whole world. Universal brotherhood has a deeper meaning which I feel means the integration of each and every human being whether high or low, rich or poor, bereft of caste, creed or colour. As an Indian when I try to look up to the composition of this great and vast country of ours, with diverse languages, religions and races but it is one India and Indians when any major issue faces our country. People speaking diverse languages, following different traditions, cultures, religions and customs but are one and unity is above all and it can be applied to one family, one caste, one country and slowly but ultimately one universe.

The integration of course is not possible without the concerted or combined effort of all of us. Here all the religious faiths or beliefs will have to play a more cohesive role so as to educate the masses about the unity and diversity of India. The world of ours is today beset with numerous problems which needs to be given a serious thought for evolving ways to eradicate the ills of society. We should all try to create an atmosphere of amity and goodwill in order to strengthen the unity amongst the nation's citizens.

Today, almost every second person talks of universal brotherhood, peace and morality, but due to internal pressures, rivalry and competition these good words are almost lost. Yet, amidst this confusion and chaos and self created grievances added with the phenomenal natural suffering man

years for peace both for society as well as for the individual self. In man forward march to civilization, many thinkers, religious leaders, philosophers and scientists make their contribution in the different times and fields contributing to the well-being of mankind, be that in the material or spiritual sphere which tend to make human life easier and happier. The quest for happiness has been illusive and imaginative. Although all religions preach peace and Goodwill for all mankind, Buddhism lays so much stress on friendship and peace towards all living beings that, when his disciple, Ananda asked the Buddha whether it was correct that half of the Buddhist religion consisted in the practice of loving-kindness or Metta, the Buddha's rejoinder was "Not half, but the whole and entire gamut of the religion." It was this emphasis on friendship or brotherhood and compassion that acted as the driving force for Buddhism to spread its message over a great part of Asia without the use of any force or even organised propaganda.

In the midst of all these, the Buddha's views as to how to attain permanent happiness strike as a strident note. It is said in the Dhammapada- "Victory breeds hatred : the vanquished live in sorrow. Hatred does not cease by hatred - it ceases by loving-kindness." The Buddha's message of friendship (Metta), compassion (Karuna) and sympathetic joy (Mudita) are not just matters of choice but can be deduced from the denial of any permanent self both in ourselves as well as in the persons when we extend these thoughts. It is known to all that birth is attended with consequential sufferings that no one can avoid being victim to decay, illness and death. These are certainly not conducive to human happiness. Even those who themselves wish to be happy or others who look upon themselves as happy, in the ultimate analysis, their happiness being transient, cannot be said to be real happiness. Happiness is after all a state of one's mind. If the mind is conditioned in such a way that it will remain untouched by their happiness or unhappiness, it will remain in a state of equilibrium and this state of the mind can be cultivated through the very same means by which Siddhartha Gautama had attained Full Enlightenment as a result of which he came to be known as the Buddha or the Fully

Enlightened One. The discovery of this great truth has been the greatest contribution of the Buddha to world's civilisation.

The path known as the Noble - Eightfold Path is the one that must be traversed to attain the state of happiness. The Path has three stages, one is that of Sila, morality of good conduct. The other is Samadhi or concentration and the third is Paññā or wisdom. These three stages can be steadfastly held onto through a determined effort of mental concentration. The mental force may be strengthened when Samadhi or concentration is practised through Vipassana, the insight system of meditation, through which one can get rid of greed, hatred and delusion. Mind is the source of good and evil. The evil mind is the product of animality and the good mind is the result of rationality which are the two factors guiding the mind. One will have to control the kind in such a way that it does not stray to evil thoughts but practice Metta, loving kindness, Karuna, compassion, follow-feeling and Upekkha equanimity. This as I have already said is the greatest contribution of the Buddha to human civilisation. Apart from this uniqueness lies the fact that he not only thought of the happiness of the human beings alone but he wanted the happiness of all beings of the world.

The effect of this teachings were so vibrant that after 300 years after His Mahaparinirvana, Emperor Asoka built his vast empire whose capital was Pataliputra or modern Patna, by waging wars against the neighbouring kingdoms. Yet, as soon as he understood the Buddha's message, he abandoned warfare and warlike activity, so great was the impact on the Emperor of the Buddha's doctrine of friendship and compassion that he declared- "All men are my children and I desire for my children that they obtain every kind of welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, so do I desire for all men". These he inscribed on rocks and pillars all throughout his Empire.

Whatever it is, all the religious system of the world have the same good qualities which they preach. It is people of little understanding who interpret the teaching according to their benefit and there lies the creation of all the misunderstanding with the understatement that the religion he proposes

is the best. After a long research and comparative study of almost all the religions I find that it is not the religions system which are good or bad it is the believers who have interpreted them as good or bad. The Buddha says that it is people with little dusts in their eyes which force them not to see or comprehend the whole goodness which lies in the religion. With the removal of these dusts he can be helped to realise the good aspects which then can lead his onward to peace and happiness which we all strive for.

Brotherhood or friendship or love has been deeply imbibed by the Buddha in his teachings. It is the boundless extension of friendly consciousness from SVA or self to SABBA or all. All the living beings become its object. There is none who remains untouched with its soothing wave. The practise preceeds as whatever beings are there, big or small, moving or not, long or short, born seeking to be born, living in the lower planes of existence or happier realms, may all be happy, may all be free from enmity, devoid of ill-will and all kinds of disturbances. Let their way-faring be smooth and full of happiness. 'As a mother protects her only child even at the cost of her life, so also let every one cultivate a boundless friendly consciousness towards all being'.

Taking all things together it can be said that Buddhism had made a wonderful contribution not only to the seekers of the Truth but it had also contributed to a wonderful culture which enriched the culture of the world. Proof of this is that wherever Buddhism has spread not a single drop of blood has been shed in its name.

Emperor Ashoka whose 2300 Birth anniversary we celebrate this year is the 50th year of India's Independence, inscribed on a stone inscription: SAMO VAY EVA SADHU- concord, indeed, is commendable'. Asoka the Great followed in the hallowed footstep of his Master the Buddha who said 'Samagga, Hetha Ma Vivadatha be united wrangle not'. These are the positive utterances we need today more then at any other time, for we live in an age

of conflict and war, of hatred and violence all over the world. Never before has the need been greater for all of us to remember the sublime and edifying message of the Buddha and Asoka.

Today we speak of universal brotherhood and peace. Yes these are our birthright and we shall have it, we must win it, universal brotherhood based on truth, love, justice and freedom. If people are just and upright, stand to reason and face facts, the bonds of amity and understanding among the various races, nations, communities, and religions will greatly strengthen.

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BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM : APPROACH TO END OF SUFFERING

Prof. N.H. Samtani

Sarnath

The theme decided for the present International Conference is relevance of Buddhism and other religions in Modern Society. It is a vast area and it is difficult to do justice & it in a single paper. I am therefore enfining to two important religions of India, Buddhism and Hinduism presenting my observations on the bars of my own Study.

That world is a **prapanca**¹ (obsession or hindrance and spiritual progress) and full of suffering is a basic except of Buddhism-Hinduism also if not fully, partially adhres to it. The deliverance is therefore sought far from **samsara** by achieving end of Suffering by **nirvana** or being in emmussion with **Brahma**, the supreme being. However on the concept of reality or absolute, there is a difference. According to Buddhims reality is **nirvana** or **Buddhahood** in which suffering completely ceazes. But this reality or highest stage can be explained in words. It can only be experienced. It is a 'come and see' phenomenon (**Sanaṣṭika, ahipasyaka**)² and this highest stage is termed in various synonymys like **nirvaṇa mukli, moksa** or **bodhi**). According to **Bhagavadgita** it is highest or supreme stage (**Brahmi sthti**) reaching which a person is no more under delusion and reaches **Brahma nirvana** at the end of life.³ Also it is said that the highest reality **Satyam Śivam and Sundaram**. The reality according to Buddhims is **avyakṛta** (unexplained) and **śunya** (Vol. 2).

Buddhism upholds there gaving or desize (**tṛṣṇa - Pdi tanhe**) is the root cause of bandage but Hinduism holds that attachment (**asakti**) to worlds things or ignorance of or non realisation of supreme being or state (**Parā Śakti** or **brahma**) is the cause of suffering. While Buddhism lays stress on the life of **Sramana** (monk) as the highest ideal of life (There is **Snu Padi Sutta** on

the virtues of life of monk, named & **Sāmañña-phadasutta** in **Dighanikāya**), Hinduism does not exclusively emphasise that life of **sanyasin** will not alone lead to liberation. While leading a life of householder also one can achieve highest aim of life. It emphasises following four gradual essence of life **Bralimelarya**, **Gārhashta**, **Vānsprastha** and **Sannyasa** (Life of celibates, householder, wanders and hermit). However in Mahayana in some sūtras like **vimalekirtinirdesasūtra**, life of householder can also be gateway to Nirvana.

While there is a place of faith (**Sraddha Prasāde**) in Buddhism as also in Hinduism, there is no place for the blind faith in Buddhism. Buddha has said that one should have faith after understanding after knowing (**avetyaprasade**) while in Hinduism, there is encouragement for unflinching, perdering on blind faith in the power of God or incarnation of God. And through this unwavering faith suffering can be removed.⁵

The Buddha stressed the mental development. Like a peerless physician (**anuttara bhisak**) and surgeon (**śclycharta**)⁶. He diagnoses the disease which lies in the mental meledis of various kinds, tensions or distresses born from greed and selfishness, anger, pride, anxiousness, jealousy and various other defilements. Unless mind is free from them it is incapable of removing the suffering (**duḥkha**). Also according to Buddhism the root cause of craving is ignorance (**avidya**). In the Theory of Dependence Origination (**Prelitya-samutpada**), the firm link among the twelve links of **lehava-cakta** is **avidya**.

Also for purifying mind, one has to lead the life of virtue (**Sila**) and practice meditation (**Samādhi**). Which Will finally lead to wisdom or insight (**prajñā**). The Eightfold path of the Buddha explains these three fundamental classifications of Buddhist Path. It is to be noted that the centre of these classifications meditation (**Samādhi**) which brings calm and develops in sight. In fact these three classifications are three pillars on which Buddhism edifice is established. The relevance and significance of **Samādhi** or meditation is now a days being emphasised in other religions also and even non-Buddhist are participating in meditation camps and many vipassana centres have been established with world. These camps may not have converted non-Buddhist to

Buddhim - neither they aim so but they have changed the perspectives of participants and their life styles and created a new awareness of Buddhist teachings and its middle path.

Now a days we are facing environmental pollution which has become serious problem throughout the world. Everyone is affected and there is an impending danger of annihilation of human race if this pollution goes unchecked. But this environmental pollution is preceded by mental pollution for which the Buddha prescribed meditation as remedy. In fact calm and silent mind sees things rightly (**samāhito yathābhutam pajanati**) but greedy and tension ridden mind never understands the things properly. The Buddha has used very good term for improper understanding which is **ayonisomanasikāra**. And all this environmental hazards are the result of these wrong perspectives.

Buddhism and Hinduism differ on permanency of phenomena. According to Buddhism nothing is permanent. Everything is fleeting. This is the nature of phenomena called in Buddhist parlance **Tathatā**. In a beautiful Zen poem how succinctly the idea of fleeting nature of things is expressed.

A heavy snowfall

Disappears into the Sea

What Silence !⁽⁷⁾

Once the idea of permanency is given up, ego-entity is gone, attachment is uprooted and the path to the removal of all pervading suffering is found.

Hinduism and Buddhism are important ethical and philosophical traditions of India. Although these two religions hold different perceptions on God, Soul, cause of suffering there is a common aim viz. the deliverance from the cycle of death and birth (**Samsāra**) in both these traditions.

Apart from vedas, upanisads and **Bhagavadgita** represent the ethics and philosophy of Hinduism. On the other hand sublime teachings of Buddha are represented in nutshell in the **Suttanipata** and **Dhammapada**, the fre-

quently quoted texts. All these basic texts show the path of deliverance from the **bhavalakva**.

When everything is impermanent, the Buddha asks his disciples whether that which is impermanent is to be regarded as sorrowful or blisseful.⁸ The obvious reply is that is sorrowful. Then he asks her is as proper to lord upon that which is impermanent, sorrowful and changeable (*Viparināma-dhamma*) as 'this is mine', 'I am this', this is myself: (*Yam pena aniccam, dukkham, Viparināmadhammam, Kallam na tam samanupassitumetam mama, eso'hamasmi, eso me atta li*)⁹. Reply is obviously the same : 'Certainly not Lord ! Now this is quite in contrast with the ideal of *ātman* as being permanent found in *Bhagavadgitā*.

From his first sermon in the deer park until his last at the age of eighty, the Budha preeched the basic truth of suffering its basic cause, its extinction and the way to it extinction. Impermanence, according to the Buddha in the fundamental law of existence which is reflected in every phenomenon.

Now, religion, the relevance of which in modern times is the theme of the present enference has become now an anthem to young generation. So called progressive section society calls it 'opium' and considers it as great bottleneck in the progress of mankind as millions of people have been killed in the name of religion and hundreds of shrines of the followers of other religions have been desecrated or destroyed by zealots and so called defending one's own religion for converting others or annihilating them if they do not convert. But religions have been established for the purpose of spiritual regeneration, for human happiness, for inculcating ethical behaviour and cultivating empassion and harmony. But today we find negation of all these virtues. The word for religion in Hinduism and Buddhism in *dharma*, a highly pregnant word vibrating wholesome and noble feelings. I doubt whether English word 'religion' is proper translating *dharma*. Ashoka in his edicts says that the essence of *dharma* is self-control, purification of mind and harmony and happiness of beings.

Both Buddhism and Hinduism are passed on higher ideals of 'bahujanahitaya' and 'bahujanasukhāya' (Welfare of many, hapiness of many) or *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (world in our family). Both have universal message of brotherhood and upliftment of all, although Budhism goes much ahead when it speaks of universal salvation and even postpone-ment of one's own salvation until the last tear of a human being is wiped out and everyone is liberated. Not only human beings but compassion is directed to all living creations.

Finally I shall say that let us not try to iron out the differences of Buddhism and Hinduism or even among other religions. Let us respect differences and let us not have superiority complex that our religion alone is the path of liberation. Let all religions which spread the message of harmony and compassion. Different religions are different flowers of various eloms spreading their fragrance in this garden of world. Let us learn to live together and learn good things from other religions. Let there be inter-religious didognes for the benefit of understanding of tenets of religion of others. This is the only way to peace, & harmony, to tensionless life, to universal happiness.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Tathagatas are free from *prapanca*. *Nippancā Tathagatā Dhp* 195. But people are involved in obsessions. *Pa pancēbhirata paja*. *Ibid*.
2. *Arthaviniscaya-Sūtra*, P. 45. cf. also *Dighanikaya III*, P. 227 (PTS ed.)
3. B.G. II. 72 (एक ब्राह्मी स्थिति)
4. On opposite of attachment or detechment, Cf this refreshingly inspring Zen 'haiko'.
Just put off
Attachment
From you mind

**This world is
paradise. Zenltarven, versa 117.**

5. **Cf. Sarvadharmā parityagya, memekan Śaranam Kraja |
Ahamtvam Sarvapapebhy, Mokksyasam ma snc̥ha ||**
BG. # 66.
6. **Cf. Arthaviniscaya Commentary, P. 160. See also
(Bīdhicaryavatara II. 5) on the concept of Buddha as great physi-
cian.**
7. **Soiku Shigematsu : A Zen Harvest, versa No. 110.**
8. **Cf. Samyuttanikaya Vol. III, P. 118.**
9. **Ibid.**

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BUDDHA'S MORAL SOCIETY

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1. Appearance of the Buddha was for mankind. He fulfilled the ten perfections (paramis) and got perfect enlightenment for them. After becoming the Buddha, he cast a compassionate eye and found them trembling.¹ They were in association with fear and passing from one state of existence to another with that. There did not appear the end of their such situation. Finding them so, he burst out— "What is the benefit of his attaining Buddhahood, when the entire beings are in suffering". He was moved to see them so and remained contemplating over their such situation. He pondered over the nature of Dhamma, beneficial in the beginning, beneficial in the middle and also beneficial in the end and understood that this would be the remedy for removing their trouble and put them on the peaceful state. He uttered :—

"Kiṃ me ekena tiṇṇena, purisena thāma dassinā,

Sabbaññutaṃ pāpunītvā, Santāressam Sadevake.

Iminā me adhikārena, Katena parisuttama,

Sabbaññutaṃ pāpunītvā, tāremi jantaṃ bahuṃ.

Sansārasotaṃ chinditva, viddhansetvā tayo bhava,

Dhammanāvaṃ Samāruhya, tāressāmti sadevakam.²

In this way, he thought that he would make a boat of Dhamma and putting them on that, he would make them free from suffering. But what is this boat of Dhamma ? He told -

"Sabbapāssa akaraṇaṃ, Kusalassa upasampadā,

Sacitta pariyodapanāṃ, Etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.³

It means - "Not to do what is immoral, to do what is moral, remove all the pollutions and make the mind pure. This is the **Dhamma-boat**.⁴ He will put the beings on this boat and make them free from their long surrounding suffering.

2. What is the meaning of putting the men on the boat of **Dhamma** ? It means by establishing a moral society, making the men **Dhammika**, understanding thoroughly 'What is immoral', what is moral, knowing the process of their arising, becoming aware of the **Lokapālaka-Dhammas**, understanding the process of change from immoral to moral actions, identifying the changing psychic factor with its associates, marking their functions, observing change in mind, tending towards moral practice - duties, moral states and the practice of **Brahmavihāra**.

3. The Buddha conceived of a society having four units in it. They were the **Bhikkhus** (monks), **Bhikkhunīs** (nuns), **Upāsakas** (lay disciples) and **Upāsikas** (female lay disciple). Each member of this four fold society should follow the moral path. They should thoroughly be conversant with what is the immoral act and what is the moral act. How does the former pollute a man and how does the latter purify ?⁵

4. Then what is immoral ? **Lobha** (greed), **Dosa** (antipathy) and **Moha** (ignorance) are the three immoral roots. A consciousness arises being associated with them. That one is immoral consciousness. The immoral consciousness generates the actions - physical, vocal and mental. Because of inspiration of the immoral consciousness, the actions are immoral. The man performing any one of such actions, is immoral being. When the men are immoral, the society, being formed with such men is the immoral society.⁶

On the other hand, **Allobha** (sacrifice), **Adosa** (friendliness) and **Amoha** (right understanding) are the moral roots. The types of consciousness which arise with their association are moral consciousness. They inspire and create the possibility of arising of physical, vocal and mental actions. These are the moral actions. The man following them, is a moral man. With the

association of such men, when there develops a society, that one is also moral society.⁷

5. Arising of moral and immoral actions does not end here but there is the continuity. An immoral action yields immoral resultant and the moral actions have moral ones. The resultant is **Vipāka** or the **Kammabija**. As a seed produces a tree, and that also gives fruit. Therefrom appears the seeds and those generate trees again. In this way there is the continuity of tree. Similarly, the resultant (**Kammabija**) generates actions. They produce again resultants and those also the actions. In this way, the continuity of actions goes on and on. There is the flow of immoral actions and also the flow of moral ones. These flows continue to exist and maintain the continuity for a long time.⁸

6. In this way, one understands the process of arising of immoral and moral actions. Knowing them so, he exerts for avoiding the immoral actions and prepare a solid ground for development of moral ones. How it is done ? It is done by helping the arising and developing of some moral forces. He first of all, exerts for arising and becoming self aware of **Lokapālaka-dhammas**. They are **Hiri** and **otappa**, which keep the **Loka** fit.

Hiri means individual shame. It allows one to concentrate on the self-shame, thinking that he is the man, a self-enlightened being (**ahaṃ he mususso sapaññavā**), why be should do anything immoral. He understands the greatness of his own self and in the light of this avoids doing anything immoral (**kathaṃ etādisaṃ kammaṃ kareyyaṃ**).

Otappa means social shame. It generates the respect for society. The fear for doing anything immoral to the society is made to understand as a sinful act. With its presence, the society, becomes a prominently dominating force and guides the man to proceed towards morality. The two together have been illustrated as **Hiri** is just like a maiden of orthodox family, having a rich heritage of maintaining the family-tradition (**kulakumāriko viya Hiri**), and the **Otappa** as a prostitute who is always fearful for being condemned by the

society if she does anything wrong to it. With the process of their functioning, they become strong and powerful with the association of *virīya* and *bala*, the two psychic states.

7. Then how does a man put the moral states in place of immoral ones? He should find out the changing psychic factor, that one is the '*manasikāra*'. It is a psychic state, the characteristics of which is to change one state to other. The immoral state is changed to moral one and the vice-versa (*purimamanato visadisam karotēti manasikāro*). With its appearance and functioning forcefully; there is the possibility to change.

Here one should understand clearly that it does not function alone. It functions with seven more psychic states, which are its associates. They are *saddhā*, *sati*, *tatramajjhatatā*, *cittapassaddhi*, *paññā*, *pīti*, and *jīvitindriya*.

(i) *Saddhā* - It is the purifying force. It removes the dirt of mind and makes it pollution-free. When the pollutions are made disassociated, mind expresses itself as pure and capable to receive the moral states. It is just like expressing the water pure and tranquil after removal of the water-grass, conch and dust particles.¹⁰

(ii) *Sati* - It is the name of ever alertness at mind-door. As the door-keeper becoming alert performs two functions, namely, not allowing the undesirable persons to enter into the room, and allowing the desirable ones to come in and live comfortably. Similarly, *sati* functions in two ways as not allowing the immoral states to enter into mind by putting a complete curtailment and making the free possibility of the entrance of moral states for their smooth functioning.¹¹

Further, it also functions as making aware of all the qualities that one possesses and the values attached to them. Knowing them so, one exerts to make those awakened which are in dormant stage, and accelerate them to functions which are in rising stage.

(iii) *Tatramajjhatatā* - It is a psychic factor which generates a balanced state in mind. With its presence, the various moral factors, arising

in mind, function in a balanced way. There remain lightness, mildness and workability in them.¹²

(iv) **Citta-Passaddhi** - It means serenity. With its arising and functioning, there develops tranquility, calmness, quietitude and serenity. It destroys the allaying of feverishness of passions. The distraction, restlessness and excitement are removed. This is essential for developing calm in functioning of moral principles.¹³

(v) **Paññindriya** - It is a knowing psychic state. It knows a thing as it really is. It is different from **saññā** (knowing) and **viññāṇa** (knowing). **Saññā** knows a thing as it reflects to the sense-doors. The sense-doors know the objects as they appear in forms or colours as red, white, blue, black, rectangular, square, triangular, etc. It does not know further more. **Viññāṇa** knows a thing as they appear as well as proceeds deeper to know the real nature of the things as impermanent (*anicca*), subject to suffering (*dukkha*) and substanceless (*anatta*). Its knowledge stops here. **Paññā** knows the things as they appear, pierce in their nature to know as impermanent, subject to suffering and substanceless and advances further to cut down the strings of attachment and helps to develop a state of desirelessness. So **paññā** knows the thing as it really is. Here the **paññā** has been used its last sense.

When the moral states harbour and start their functions it is desirable to understand as they are in real sense. The function of **paññā** is to know the things perfectly in the true sense.¹⁴

(vi) **Pīti** - It refers to arising of joy. It is not the joy of realization of the object, but it is the joy one receives in anticipation of realization of the object. One realizes that with functioning of the various psychic factors, there is the possibility of developing, moral order. It is in hope of such thinking, there arises the thrill of pleasant sensation. It arises in five ways, namely, **khuddikā-pīti**, **khaṇika-pīti**, **okantikā-pīti**, **ubbegā-pīti**, and **pharṇā-pīti**.¹⁵

(a) **Khuddikā-pīti** - It is small quantity of joy that remains on the surface of body. It causes the 'flesh to creep'.

(b) **Khaṇikā-pīti** - It is the name of momentary joy which arises in a particular moment and disappears immediately. It is just like the flash of lightning.

(c) **Okantikā-pīti** - It is a type of overwhelming joy which appears and makes one overpowered by it. It is just like the breakers appearing on the seashore.

(d) **Ubbegā-pīti** - It is the name of a transporting joy. It enables one to float in the air just like a lump of cotton carried by the wind.

(e) **Pharana-pīti** - It refers to the suffusing joy. It pervades the whole body just like a full blown bladder or it is like a strong flood which overflows the small tanks and ponds.

All the five types of joy are the generation of pleasant sensation in his endeavor.

(vii) **Jīvitindriya** - It is the name of life-force. It sustains and controls the other psychic factors. It is called **jīvita** because it sustains the co-associates and **indriya** as it regulates and controls them. It infuses life in the psychic factors. They are vitalized by it. There is the healthy functioning of psychic factors with its presence.¹⁶

8. These are the seven psychic associates of '**monasikāra**'. When they arise, matured and start functioning, **manasikāra** becomes powerful. With its determined efforts, the immoral forces become weak. They do not act abruptly in disturbing the moral order. In the situation, the change takes place. The immoral states are subdued and the function of moral psychic factors begins. Philosophically, the **hetu-paccaya**, **samanantara-paccaya**, **nissaya-paccaya**, etc are at work. With them there is the functioning of moral society.

9. The moral society begins with awareness towards duties of each individual and their performance smoothly.

The fourfold society as conceived by the Buddha is generally divided into six units, namely, the parents as eastern clime, the teachers as southern

clime, the sons and wives as western clime, the friends and advisors as northern clime, the domestic servants as underneath clime and the recluses and Brahmanas as the upper clime.¹⁷

10. Each unit has the double role. When it is said that the parents are the eastern clime, there are sons and daughters in one side and the parents on the other. Each one has a set of duties to be performed by each other. For instance, the sons and daughters have a set of five duties towards their parents. They are as - (1) "They have nourished me from the childhood and made me as grown up. In doing so they have taken much trouble. I am now capable and should nourish them. The service to the parents is a noble work. (2) I will perform all the duties to make them happy. (3) They have established a family tradition - pure in its nature. I will make it continued and shall not put any harm to it. (4) I will receive their heritage - may be worldly, spiritual or cultural. (5) After their death, I will offer whatever is required for their peaceful stay and harmonious living in other world". When the parents, the eastern clime, are served by the sons and daughters, the parents also perform a set of five duties towards their sons and daughters (1) They protect them from sinful and immoral deeds. Whenever they mark the development of immoral leanings, they, in a harmonious way, put a check on it, (2) they direct them to the moral path. They think about their moral development and direct them to follow the path sincerely. (3) They give them the best education - moral, spiritual or practical to lead their life peacefully. (4) They make a search of a suitable wife and marry them in time. (5) They also offer the inheritance of worldly fortune or spiritual gain in time. These are the sets of duties to be performed by the sons and daughters towards the parents and vice-versa. The eastern clime becomes safe, calm, peaceful, free from any fear.¹⁸

In this way twofold duties have been prescribed for each member of the six units of the society. They are performed with mindfulness and alertness. With their performance, there is the generation of moral leanings, peace and tranquility.¹⁹

11. After generation of awareness in performing the duties to the six units of society, there starts ten types of moral acts. They are the **dāna**, **sīla**, **bhāvanā**, **apacāyana**, **veyyāvacca**, **patti-dāna**, **pattānumodana**, **dhammasavana**, **dhammadesanā** and **ditthi-ujukarana**.²⁰

(i) **Dāna** - When something is given to some one with moral volition in **dāna**. Here the moral volition is important. It is the name of a moral consciousness associated with **alobha**, **adosa** and **amoha**. When something is sacrificed with such a consciousness, it is called **dāna**. It is of three types, namely, **hīna** (lower), **majjhima** (middle) and **pañña** (high). **Chanda**, **citta**, **virīya** and **vimāṇā** are the four factors at work while arising of **dāna-citta**. If they are lower, the **dāna** is also lower. If they are middle, the **dāna** is also middle. If they are higher, the **dāna** is also higher.

If **dāna** is given for attainment of name and fame, it is lower type of **dāna**. It is of middle type when it is given for getting moral resultant. If it is done without any hope, selfless and fruitless, it is the higher **dāna**.

Again it is the lower **dāna** when given for attainment of worldly gain. If one gives **dāna** for getting freedom from the worldly pollutions, it is the **dāna** of middle type. If it is given for the deliverance of all the beings, it is the higher **dāna**.

(ii) **Sīla** - It means the proper regulation and establishment of physical and vocal acts. It stands for moral principles. When one follows the **sīla**, it means he is following the moral principles. It may be **pañca-sīla**, **aṭṭha-sīla**, **dasa-sīla** and **uposatha-sīla**.

(a) **Pañca-sīla** refers to five moral principles to be followed by all. All the **upāsakas** and **upāsikas** follow them without any exception. They are the refraining from killing, stealing, committing adultery, telling lie and indulging in the intoxicant drinks.

(b) The house-holders keeping a bit higher life, follow these five as well as three more. They are the refraining from taking untimely meal, dance, music, vulgar show, etc. and using the garlands, perfumes and pastes.

(c) The householders still like to have some pure life, follow two more. They are refraining from high and lofty beds and accumulating gold and silver. These ten precepts are followed sincerely by the novices taking the life of a recluse.

These ten moral precepts appear in a bit different way in other places. They are refraining from killing, stealing, committing adultery, telling lies, slandering, harsh speech, frivolous talk, covetousness, malevolence and micchaditthi. Out of them the first three are the physical, the next four are vocal and the last three are mental.²¹

(d) **Uposatha-sīla** - The **uposatha** is celebrated once in a month. It is regarded as a pious day. The house-holders observe the first eight moral precepts on that particular day. They are observed on other days also but on this day, it is observed sincerely. For this reason, they are called **uposatha-sīla**.²²

(iii) **Bhāvanā**. It is the third moral deed. **Bhāvanā** means practice. It is the practice of meditation on **rūpi** and **arūpi** objects. The former refers to such objects which have some forms and colours and the latter stands as formless object. The house-holders draw their mind from different directions and concentrates it on these objects. In the process, the five hindrances are removed and five jhana-factors appear. With their appearance, one gets five stages of **rūpa-jhāna** and the stages of **arūpa-jhāna**.

(iv) **Apacāyana** - It is the moral act of paying respect to the elders. The teachers, the parents, the preceptors, etc. are regarded as elderly people. To stand in their honour, pay respect, speak honourable words come under **apacāyana**. Really speaking, it is a moral consciousness.

(v) **Veyyāvacca** - It is the name of the physical, vocal or mental actions done towards the teachers, parents and elderly people. Selfless service to the diseased persons is also included in it. It is also a moral volition appearing through threefold actions.

(vi) **Pattidāna - Patti** means that which one receives after performing moral deeds. It is the name of moral resultant. Such resultants are accumulated to one's credit. To offer all or a part of it to some needy person for removal of some trouble, is the **Pattidāna**.

(vii) **Pattānumodana**. To accept with honour the offer of merits is **Pattānumodana**. To become grateful, humble and polite towards one who offers it, is the act. It is also the name of a moral volition appearing within.

(viii) **Dhammasavana**. It means hearing the moral discourse given by the Buddha or some pious being. It is sincerely heard to remove the layers of pollutions of his own as well to communicate the ideals to others for the same. As the blossomed flower beautifies itself as well as pleases others with its fragrance, similarly the **Dhamma-savana** benefits the two, one who hears and to whom it is communicated.

(ix) **Dhamma-desanā**. It means communicating the **Dhamma** to others. Beings are under suffering. They are seen trembling because of the thickets of attachment. They go from one state of existence to another under the flow of suffering. This flow should be discontinued and a man may enjoy the sense of inner joy. For this, **Dhamma** is the only leveller. It helps in continuing the flow of finer senses of inner happiness. The communication of **Dhamma** is essential for this. Therefore, preaching the **Dhamma** not for any type of material gain but only for helping the people in removing the layers of pollution is **Dhamma-desanā**.

(x) **Ditthi-ujukarana**. **Ditthi** is generally understood as false view. **Sassata-ditthi**, **Uccheda-ditthi**, etc. are the sixty two types of wrong views²³ which come under the flow. They put a covering on the eye of the man and make him bewildered. Being so, he does not understand the merit of his own self, Law of **Kamma** and forceful activities in taking the beings to different types of existence. Really speaking, the beings are the product of **Kamma**, they inherit **Kamma**, and their states of existence as good or bad are under the influence of **Ditthi**. It should gradually be removed or totally destroyed.

12. Flowing in this way in the stream of moral **Dhammas**, one feels within himself some change. His mind now is associated with three moral roots. His physical, vocal and mental activities are elevated. They naturally lean towards 'what is moral'. In this background, he proceeds to practise the **Brahma-vihāra**. The term **Brahma-vihāra** has two component parts, namely, **Brahma** and **Vihāra**. **Brahma** means noble and **Vihāra** means the way of life. It is the noble way of life associated with harmony. It has the four organs in way of functioning. They are the **Mettā**, **Karuṇā**, **Muditā** and **Upekkhā**.²⁴

(i) **Mettā** means friendliness. It generates **Parahitakāmatā**, a desire to do good to others. The consciousness is extended from self to others and reaches to infinity. It embraces all in its fold and proceeds like - 'let all the beings free from illness', 'let all the beings be free from fear'. Whatever beings there are big or small, long or short, born or unborn, living in this world or others, let all be happy. The beings who are moving or unmoving, staying in one place, all should be free from any trouble. 'As a mother, who has the only son, protects him even at the cost of her life, similarly an unbounded consciousness be extended to all the beings'.

The practice of friendliness is not limited to certain type of beings. It is for all beings - '**Sabhajanesu mettā**'. It should proceed to friends, foes, indifferents alike.

(ii) **Karuṇā**. It means compassion, sympathy or affection. It is a concept practical in nature. It embraces all the beings who are under suffering - '**Dukkhi-janesu karuṇā**'. Here **Kaṃ** stands for suffering. **Runāti-iti** enters into that and makes endeavour to destroy that. Thus **Karuṇā** is a positive effort to be at one with the suffering of others and exert for its removal. It is not a verbal expression, but a practical positive effort. With its practice the sufferings of others is destroyed.

(iii) **Muditā**. It is the name of unmixed joy. It is practised on the beings who are in happy state. They are healthy, well-educated and progress-

ing well in their day to day life. For such persons, jealousy is harboured in the society. People become jealous to see them. But such jealousy should be replaced by **Muditā**. It proceeds with joy or rather unmixed joy to see others in progressing state. It expresses within that all the beings should prosper more and more. Their prosperity be increased more and more.

(iv) **Upekkhā**. It means indifferent. There are persons in the society who are ignorant. They do not understand what is good or bad. Sometimes, out of ignorance they do something wrong. Knowing their ignorant attitude, one should not take it into account their wrong actions. Rather one should be indifferent to their such wrongful doing and make endeavour gradually to remove their foolishness and unwanted behaviour. Their ignorance, in this way, will be destroyed and they will act and behave just like the noble men.

It is in this way, the **Brahma-vihāra** should be practised.

Here it may be seen that all the four organs have to do something for generation of moral harmony in the society. The friendliness (**Mettā**) destroys ill will and generates good will. It cuts down the boundary of self and helps the extension of friendly consciousness for all.

The compassion (**Karuṇā**) destroys cruelty, the act of injuring others and generates the act of becoming one with the trouble and making efforts for its removal.

The joy (**Muditā**) destroys the aversion, disinterestedness and helps in feeling joy on the prosperity of others.

The indifference (**Upekkhā**) destroys hatred and generates the feeling of indifference towards the folly of others.²⁵

In this way when there shall be the absence of ill-will, cruelty, aversion and hatred in the society, there shall be the development of moral order full of harmony, peace, and tranquility. This is the Buddha's moral society. There is the need of development of such society in the present day.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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Pajaṃ imaṃ tamhagataṃ bhavesu.
K.N.1, 389.**
2. **K.N. 7, (B.V.) 309.**
3. **K.N.1, (D.P.) 35.**
4. **Kullupamaṃ dhammaṃ desemi...
M.N.1, 179.**
5. **K.N.1 (D.P.). 17.**
6. **D.S. 229.**
7. **D.S. 229.**
8. **D.S. 229.**
9. **P.V. 50.**
10. **M.P. 28.**
11. **M.P. 28.**
12. **A.S. 153.**
13. **A.S. 155.**
14. **D.S. 20-21.**
15. **A.S. 95.**
16. **D.S. 21.**
17. **Mātāpitā disā pubbā, Ācariyā Dakkhinā Disā,
Puttadārā disāpacchā, Mittāmaccā cā uttarā.
Dāsakamakarā heṭṭha, Uddhaṃ Samanabrāhmaṇa,
Etā disā namasseyya, almotto kule gihī.
D.N. 2, 148.**

18. D.N.2, 146.
19. ... disa patrchanna khema apatibhaya,
D.N.2, 146-148.
20. A.S.2, 558-567.
21. P.T.S., Dictionary - 712
22. A.N. 347-56.
23. D.N.1, 8-26.
24. D.S. 157-161.
25. Mettā sinehaṭi ti attho, Paradukkhe sāti sadhunaṃ
hadayakampanaṃ karoti ti Karuṇa, Kināti va paradukkhaṃ
hiṃsati vināseti ti karuṇā, Sayama va modati,
modanamattameva va taṃ ti muditā. Averā hontuṭi ti
adibya padappahanena majjhatta - bhavupagamanena ca
Uppekkhati ti upekkhā.

A.S. 157.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.N.	=	Anguttara-Nikāya
A.S.	=	Aṭṭa-Sālinī
D.N.	=	Dīgha-Nikāya
D.S.	=	Dhamma-Saugini
K.N.	=	Khuddaka-Nikāya
M.N.	=	Milinda-Pañha
P.T.S.	=	Pali Text Society
P.V.	=	Paramattha-Vinicchaya

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ETHICAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS OF BUDDHISM

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One of the important aspects of Buddhism is its attitude towards society and ethics. People think that Buddhism suggests to escape from active life and to take rest in Buddhist temples or in forests. But Buddhism never tells to withdraw from social responsibilities. Even Lord Buddha did not lead a lethargic life and he never suggested to the people to renounce the world completely. Therefore Buddhism says to take part actively in the developmental activities of society and cultivate kushala karmas renouncing the evil thought, selfishness, hatred, anger, jealousy and ill-will.

Today most of the people are depending on false learning being ignorant of scientific knowledge just for their subsistence and it has come under severe criticism by many. Centuries before Buddha criticized this practice of false learning and the resulting false living. Even at Buddha's time there were some crafts of pseudo learning. Buddha always rejected such living as not a right kind of living where a person leads his life by practising the skills like Anga, Uptada, Swapna and the predictions of the future course of events in human life. To do away with all those practices, is said to be Mahasheela.¹

Indian culture and its way of living are undoubtedly glorious, but at present they are in ruins. The root cause of this fall is that the people have forgotten the law of Karma. Buddha had preached a lot about this doctrine of Karma.² First a will would take root in the mind to perform a deed. Then that will actualizes into a deed. That's why Buddha says that our wills should be pure. These wills are not inert, but they have consciousness. Buddha called this consciousness alone a Karma.³

Buddha believed that no one can escape from Karma, hence he tells us to actively participate in Karmic life. Performance of deeds is inevitable in the world. Everybody in the society should perform deeds but they must be holy deeds. Even longevity would increase by such deeds.⁴ Every Buddhist should perform Karma by his own effort. Buddha only guides to proceed on the right path.⁵ Therefore while depicting a deed Buddha tells about TEN types of Kushala Karmas (holy deeds). By the performance of these Kushala Karmas, the Akushala Karmas (bad deeds) themselves would extinguish. According to Buddha Akushala Karmas too are of TEN types. Thus Buddha depicts TWENTY Karmas.⁶ When a person proceeds with the performance of such deeds he would always be blessed with splendid victory. A rebirth would occur only when these are fructified.⁷

Like in some other religions Buddha never said that by worshipping him he would forgive all our sins. Buddhism teaches that man is responsible for his own activities. Buddha advised not to depend on theories, Cults, Gurus. He tells us to be related to the world by six-quarters.⁸ East-parents, south-teachers, west-wife and children, north friends and companions. One has TWELVE types of relationship with society because relating to society is always reciprocal. Therefore Buddha advises about the duties towards friends and relatives thus⁹ - "Be generous, be courteous, be benevolent, treat them as you treat yourself and be good as your word." He tells about the duties towards religious teachers like this - "Treat religious teachers with affection in gesture, speech and mind. Let your house be opened to them and supply their temporal needs."¹⁰

Buddhism has emerged as an upshot of the existing evils of the society. Even in the present society there are so many evil practices, customs and superstitions. If we ponder over them we get an answer that "Desire" is the root cause of all such evils and suffering is the result of "Desire". Hinduism says that life is full of bliss, on the other hand Buddhism considers life is full of sorrows. Hence it considers removal of suffering as the essence of life. Buddha therefore preached to renunciate the "Desire".¹¹

He argued that "caste" is not a privilege that comes by birth. He considered Brahmin as the one who possesses *Brahma Janana* (great knowledge). He severely attacked the caste system which allowed the division of the society on the basis of the caste. Thereby he strived for establishing an Utopian Society. He even took "Upali" a low caste person (Barber) as his disciple. He maintained that those who do not serve unto society and enjoy the wealth of nation are just a burden to it. (*Mogham sa ratthapindam bhunjati*).

He never accepted king as the one bestowed by divine sancity. He believed that monarchy would not occur from the accumulation of individual wealth. Such personal wealth has resulted in inequality and division of the people of the society. In Buddhist monasteries all religious people enjoyed the equal respect. The out castes who were even denied the status of human beings of the society were also held in high esteem in the monasteries. Buddhism stood for equality of all the people free of all the narrow differences like race, nation and caste etc.

It practiced the co-existence principle of *Panchasheela* (Five moral tenets of life). The four varnas of the caste system like *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, *Shudra* would lose their identity soon after their immersion into the Buddhist sangha in the same way as the reverse like *Ganga* and *Yamuna* would, after reaching the sea. In those days even a commoner commanded the respect of a king just by being a Buddhist monk. King *Ajata Shatru* had himself confessed the fact.

Buddhism strived for economical equality and established a caste-less society. Intellectuals like *Rahul Sankrityayana* say that communism had its origins in Buddhism alone. Some other say that Buddhism is a progressive religion other than a static one on account of its removing the evils of the society by treading the path of creative thinking.

According to Buddha the king should occupy the position of a parent to his subjects. The four hospitalities explain the way the king should care for his subjects and express his good will. They are (1) Generacity (2) Kind word

(3) Commitment to the welfare of the people. (4) A sense of equality with the people.¹² In Buddhism teacher provides to his pupil with more experience in what he has studied. He thoroughly instructs his student in other fields of studies and nurtures him a good reputation among friends and companions and provides for his safety in every quarter. Buddhism thus provides for ample motivation, experience and material for education.

Family functions and events like births, weddings, deaths and memorial ceremonies provide the education in an informal way. Children and every youth and adult learn most of their customs, manners, cultural values and every aspiration by observing or participating in these non-formal educational activities beyond the personal level and the emancipation of the individual. Buddhism recognizes the family as a unit of society and nation. In other discourse Lord Buddha advises to lead the blaimless life wihtout becoming the nuisance to the people.¹³ Thus Buddhism not only gives importance to religious life, it also gives the equal importance to the social life.

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A WAY TO HARMONY IN THE SOCIETY

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Buddhism is a personal religion, but not an institutional because every one is his own master. No one can be the master of others. The text enumerates that—

"Attā hi Attano Nātho, Ko hi Nātho Paro Siyā,

Attanā hi Sudantena, Nātham, Labhati Dullabham."

"Attanā hi Kataṃ Pāpaṃ, Attanā Saṅkilissati,

Attanā Akataṃ Pāpaṃ, Attanā va Visujjhati

Suddhi Asuddhi Paccattaṃ, Nañño Aññaṃ Visodhaye."

Thus, self is the lord of self, who else could be the lord ? With self well subdued, a man finds a lord such as few can find. By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone, by oneself one is purified. The pure and the impure by themselves, no one can purify another.¹

Lord Buddha was the Mahākāruṇika, the lord of compassion. Appearing on the Indian scene He visualised the pitiable condition of the masses of his day and the injustice or in-human activities done to the millions of people. It is said that the people were engaged in malpractices, quarrelling themselves on the name of rare and class distinction. People of the day held a poor and rough attitude towards the women's intelligence and ability.² Thus, they are suffering from false and wrong views. He (the Buddha) could not close his eyes to such a pathetic situations prevailing in the society and decided to preach his Dhamma for the good of many and the welfare of many

(bahujanahitāya bahujana-sukhāya³). It was his mission for delivering man from all kinds of suffering. Though his primary interest has been moral and spiritual, but it is also related to the other aspects of life including social aspects.

Buddha was a practical thinker. After visualising conditions, nature and temperament of the people. He has given the world a practical and scientific teaching which is unique. In order to create harmony in the society. He instructs the people that :-

Nahi verena verāni, Samantīdha Kudācanaṃ,

Averena ca samanti, Esa Dhammo Sanantano.

Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā, Na haneyya naghāteyya.

Na Paresaṃ Vilomāni, Na Paresaṃ Katākatam,

Attanā hi avekkheyya, Katāni akatāni ca.

In addition to these, there are many other verses which are significant and guide in day-to-day life a man in creating peace, harmony and congenial atmosphere in the society. Though the whole teachings of the Buddha have been devoted for the welfare of men, but the theme of all teachings can be seen in the Noble Eightfold Path expounded by him in his first sermon rejecting the two extremes : 1- the extreme of sensual indulgence (Kāmesukāma-sukhallikānuyogo) and 2- the extreme of self-mortification (Attakilamathānuyogo)⁴ Van. Rāhula has rightly remarked that :- "Practically the whole teachings of the Buddha, to which he devoted himself during forty-five years, deal in some way or other with this Path. He explained it in different ways and in different words to different people according to the stage of their development and their capacity to understand and follow him. But the essence of those many thousand of discourses scattered in Buddhist Scriptures, is found in the Noble Eightfold Path"⁵. Prof. Max Muller opines that "All testimonies, from hostile and from friendly sources, agree that it is one of the most perfect moral codes that the world has ever known". The Buddha

himself, taking a path somewhat analogous to science by investigation and formulation of hypothesis, testing and stating new hypothesis in the period before Enlightenment, has arrived at the Absolute Truth on Enlightenment. However, the present paper is intended to highlight the relevance of Noble Eightfold Path in creating harmony in the society.

The Noble Eightfold Path is so called because of having its eight constituents. They are :-

1. **Sammādiṭṭhi - Right View**
2. **Sammāsaṅkappo - Right thought**
3. **Sammā Vācā - Right Speech**
4. **Sammā Kammanto - Right Action**
5. **Sammā Ājivā - Right Livelihood**
6. **Sammā Vāyāmo - Right Effort**
7. **Sammā Sati - Right Mindfulness**
8. **Sammā Samādhi - Right Concentration**

The first two constituents refer to Paññā (Wisdom) and the last three Samādhi (Concentration) and in between two the three constituents signify Sīla (Moral conduct). Thus, this Eightfold Path has three steps namely; Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā. Each one is helpful to one another and serves as a background. It means Sīla is for Samādhi, Samādhi is for Paññā and that also culminates in realization of Nibbāna, a state of eternal bliss.⁶ It is a remarkable event that while Lord Buddha was wandering at Savatthī, a divine being appeared before him and put a question for removal of his doubts and wishing for the dawn of complete harmony on the earth. The question runs thus :-

*"Anto Jatā bhai Jatā,
Jatāya Jatitā Pajā,
Taṃ taṃ Gotāṃ pucchāmi,
Ko imaṃ Vijataye Jataṃ ti"*

*"There is Tangle within and tangle without,
The beings in general are entangled in it.
And so, O Gotam! I ask you the question,
who can succeed in disentangling this Tangle."*

The Buddha replied :—

*"Sīle Patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño,
Cittaṃ Paññaṃ Ca bhāvayam,
Atapī nipako bhikkhu,
So imaṃ Vijāṭaye Jataṃ ti"*

It is a path of gradual purification moving rhythmically in ascending order and culminating in total transformation of an ordinary man into spiritually elevated one. All the religious practices, ethical principles and philosophical ideals revolve around the Noble Eightfold Path.

Moral conduct :

Taking into consideration the order of three steps mentioned in the above verse uttered by the Buddha as a answer to the question put by a divine being, we come to discuss the moral conduct (Sila) which comprises Right Speech (Sammā vācā), Right Action (Sammā Kammanto) and Right Livelihood (Sammā Ājivā) because they serve as a base of human character and play important role in creating harmony in the society.

Right Speech :

It is the avoidance and the expulsion of the four forms of wrong speech, namely : lying, back-biting, use of offensive and abusive words and idle or frivolous talk. Indulgence in such speeches creates enmity in the society. He lost beliefs. No body believes him. His credit goes down day by day. Idle talk destroys one's own welfare or that of society. Therefore, right speeches should be absorbed and followed.

Right Action :

Right Action is refraining from and the expulsion of the three forms

of wrong action by way of the body, namely killing (Pāṇātipāta), Stealing (Adinnādāna), and Adultery. It is a moral prohibition on stealing, killing etc. Their violation is the immediate cause of greed (lobha). It destroys the humanistic feelings of the society. Therefore it is essential to follow the Right Actions.

Right Livelihood :

It is an important factor that affects the society. Every body needs livelihood for existence. But there should be a right livelihood. Right Livelihood is the refraining from wrongful acts, whether of body or of speech as a means of earning a living.

For a householder, trading in human beings, weapons, meat, intoxicants and poisons has been strictly forbidden by the Buddha.⁸ Further, a number of wrong ways of earning livelihood have been enumerated from which both the householders and the renunciants are required to keep themselves aloof. They are : Kuhana (deceitful appearance), Lapana, Tula kuta, Kansakuta, Mana-kuta etc.⁹

In short we can say that the Right Livelihood is free from harm to an exploitation of others. It creates harmony and generates the seeds of humanity in the society.

Mental Training :

Human behaviour is dynamic. It is always changing. According to Abhidhamma, there are two sets of tendencies working within us. One set is Kusala (wholesome) and other is Akusala (unwholesome) in nature. Therefore, Mental Training is essential to act properly. In Noble Eight-fold Path, the Mental Training comprises Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Right Effort :

It is the effort for the suppression or uprooting of evil and the development of morals. It is of four kinds :— the effort to prevent the arising

of unarisen evil; the effort to suppress the risen evil; the effort to arouse the unarisen moral; and the effort to develop the risen moral.

These efforts refer to the destruction of the roots of evil like attachment, ill-will and delusion, which are the elements of anti humanism and the arising of moral roots like sacrifice (alobha), friendliness (adosa) and knowledge (amoha), which are the basic elements of harmony.

Right Mindfulness :

Right Mindfulness means proper awareness towards physical, vocal and mental doings. It avoids the immoral doings and performs moral doings. It may be defused as living with strong determination to get rid of defilements. Actually, it controls the unsteady fleeting of mind and helps in concentration to know the real nature of a thing.¹⁰ It helps in creating the congenial atmosphere in the society.

Right Concentration :

It is evident from the text that mind is pure and luminous by its nature and defiled by in-coming defiling forces.¹¹ With them it loses its own natural form and becomes fickle, restless and unsteady.¹² It wanders here and there and creates attachment with various objects and indulges in sensual pleasure. Therefore, with an idea to remove the covering and bring it back to its natural form, one proceeds for the practice of meditation. And having known the hindrances (Nivaranas) as the causes of fickleness, one tries to remove them. Those hindrances are : Kamachanda, Vyapada, Thina-middha, udhacca-kukkuva an Vicikiccha. So long these hindrances are at work, it is very difficult to get concentration of mind. Through right efforts Yogavacara suppresses them and gets concentration on any one of forty objects as is suited to his temperament.

Incense of Right concentration at one stage the four Sublime states like Metta (universal love), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (sympathetic joy) and upekkha (equanimity) arise within him. These are the main, factors of humanity. They destroy enmity, hatred, favouritism etc. They are called the

pillars of individuals happiness, social emity and universal peace. Their cultivation leads to create harmony in the society.

Wisdom :

It is the third step of the Path. With virtues, one-pointedness and its continuous practice, the defilling forces associated with body, speak and mind are reduced, weakened and rendered functionless. Thus, through the first to steps, the physical, vocal and mental misdeeds are curtailed and the mind becomes pure, free from pollutions, tranquil and subtle. With such a state of mind one comes to this stage of wisdom (Panna).

It comprises the first two constituents of the Path, They are :-

1. Right view (Samma-dtthi) and
2. Right Aspiration (Samma Sankappa)

Right View :

It is the first constituent in the order of Eightfold Path. It means refraining from all types of wrong views and gaining right views. We know that views may be either right or wrong. The aim of ethics in Buddhism is to make it clear that what is moral and immoral deeds. According to Abhidhamma Philosophy there are three moral roots and three immoral roots. They are : Alobha, Adosa and Amoha, Lobha, dosa and moha. If moral roots are associated with mind and with that mind whatever we do either physical, or vocal or mental deeds, those deeds are called moral deeds. In the same way, if immoral roots are associated with the mind and with that mind whatever we do, that will be immoral. Thus Right view gives us the vision what to do and what not to do. Then we proceed further to do moral actions because all beings, that are born, are maintained on account of the conditions to mind and matter whether they be of a gross kind or subtle kind; and thereby suffering arises by existence.

Wighout going into detail I simply say that there are three kinds of Right View such as :-

1. **Kammassakata Sammaditthi** : It gives the knowledge of wholesome and unwholesome actions performed by the people.
2. **Dasavatthuka Sammaditthi** : The Buddha enumerates ten views as being right like charity etc.
3. **Latu-sacca Sammaditthi** : It is the right understanding of Four Noble Truths.¹³

Right Aspiration :

It is of great importance to the remaining seven constituents of the Path, which would cease to be so called without Right Aspiration.

Right Aspiration is benevolent thinking of right ideals. It is of three kinds, namely, the Aspiration to Renounce (Nekkhamma Sankappa), the Aspiration of Non-hatred (Avyapada Sankappa) and the Aspiration of Non-harming or Non-violence (Avihinsa Sankappa).

1. **Aspiration to Renounce** : It is a firm determination to renounce the household-life because household-life is full of sense pleasures or desires. The desires in the sensuous things blind a person to what is real and true. They create illusion of substance and concreteness where there is only emptiness. They sensuous delights at last create only misery, because they never completely satisfy one. It is unsatisfied desires born of indulging in sensuality which sustains suffering. This thrust may lead one to commit evils and to path of lower existence. Such desires be controlled through the ideals of Renunciation.
2. **Aspiration of Non-hatred** : It means to have thoughts free from hatred to be full of friendliness or love to all living beings.
3. **Aspiration to Non-harming** : It is the name of kindness or compassion to beings in distress. Such a person does not wish their destruction or to injure living beings, but always strives to help them.

Thus, in short it may be said that Renunciation is the destruction of

attachment or lust. Love is the destruction of ill-will or hatred and compassion which springs from an understanding of suffering, is destructive of delusion. These three ideals are the basic factors in creating harmony in the society.

It is the Middle way, the practices of which eliminates all kinds of defiling factors, poverty, unemployment, riots and wars which are social miseries. The roots of these are ignorance and anger which must be rooted out by the Buddha's doctrine of compassion, loving kindness, tolerance and wisdom. They arise by the practice of Noble Eightfold Path.

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RELIGION & SOCIAL INTEGRATION

K.P.R. Bandhu

We are living in the era of violence, which is embedded in our thought, speech and action. Egoistic approach and Ambition of acquiring political power results in brutalities, wide spread destruction, denial of human rights and dignity. We are having around us corruption, greed, terrorism, aggressiveness & selfishness of individuals, groups, religious formations and Nations, gripped so deep that it gives steep rise in crime & violence on global level resulting in rapid declination of moral, Spiritual & ethical values. Because of these factors, We have many acute problems - Personal (physical & mental), social & religious; tensions, economic & political chaos etc. In present context, the religious problems are in such a bad shape and at such low level that religious intolerance & social discrimination has created *fissure and disintegration* in societies at regional & global dimensions. **Inspite of Universalistic Teachings of all great and historic religious Teachers and recognition of right to religious freedom as a human right, truly speaking, no religion can claim that it practices its doctrines perfectly & truthfully.**

The present scenario of Social order in context of religion has gone worst. Religious bigots, Castes fanatics, ethnic chauvenist & criminals have increased pressure on *tolerance & dissent, the twin bulwark of democracy*; i.e., the Hindutva wave overwhelmed the heartland; the religious and ethnic upsurges have been confined to the periphery. Atrocities in the name of religion is prevalent which shocks every right thinking individual of civilised and enlightened world. Continuous recurrences of violence and bloodshed on religious faith, act of religious fundamentalism such as communal carnage, violent conflicts, terrorism compels us to realise for organised effort of social harmony and integration ensuring genuine respect, tolerance and brotherhood for individuals or groups or nations which practices different value-based

religious beliefs. We have to think of ways and means so that the *historic religions can bring about the unions of heart and changes of conducts and establish relations between human beings of different religions*. They can derive a common spirit of understanding and appreciation from their respective philosophies which ultimately brings the spiritual reality according to their different temperament and choice of path to achieve identical goal. We must use our knowledge and wisdom for the growth of perfect freedom lying in perfect harmonious relationship. It requires our concerted effort and Serious attention. The realisation of eternal truths manifested in different religions would ensure peace and happiness for mankind and develop an integrated society.

Indian Society is conglomeration of different religions and stratification of different characteristics based upon caste, creed and class-groups. Within these groups or castes, they have no equal status of inter communication and inter-relationship. Also, amongst these stratified groups or castes, they have recognised and sanctioned differences which determine their social order. These social orders are further influenced by factors like wealth power, strength, heredity, education and vocations, languages, culture, tribes and life-styles. Age old prejudices and deep-seated intolerances, fanaticism and hatred has become part of social order. The major religions based on graded inequality devoid of brotherhood, love, compassion and tolerances has divided the society into antagonistic camps in place of uniting hearts of individual or group to lead a harmonious life. Not only that, our social, political and even legal institutions have been badly effected failing to protect the guarantee of the freedom of religions. These have challenged eventually the national equilibrium, sentiments and nationally itself.

The United Nations charter in its '*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*' in Art.-10 has expressed the right of freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion in the following terms.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and

freedom, either alone or in community with other and public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

The above declaration has following features:

1. Right of human equality without discrimination.
2. Right to adopt religion or belief of one's own choice and profess and practice it alone or on community basis.
3. Legal and moral obligations in regard to religious and moral education.

The above factors implies that state should guarantee the above provisions. *In Indian constitution the religious freedom have been guaranteed in Art. 25 to Art. 30. In a multi-religious societies like ours, various contradictory systems exist. As the society is secular, its laws have taken precedence over the dictates of religions; but has allowed the varieties of religious beliefs. It has guaranteed the equality to all by law as by religious and Social Orders having traditional obligations and commitment for their followers.*

The discrimination related to institutionalised religion like Hinduism in India derive authority from its traditional obligations and commitment enshrined in scriptures and perfection of its revelation. It tends to breed intolerance and align themselves with state-power to put serious restriction on freedom of other faith. Also, a few other religious organisations of India, owing to historical and sociological reasons, play a powerful role in public affairs and personal laws based on religious doctrine. They control Educational Institutions and political parties and exert pressure to share the electoral alliances in legislatures. This is example of Indian Secularism. *A common, uniform civil code still remains a distant goal as because legal revolution on social foundation never has been there. There were resistance to such changes. In India in fact the policy of neutrality towards religions was only on paper.*

Even the Marxism which challenges religion and religious freedom, has changed its colour on Indian soil and in Indian Society. It is dominated by Brahmanism or Hinduism. Karl's Marx's most propound truth is that man's material advancement controls the nature of his society and nature of society both, to be stable and advance. *Secularist - attitudes, right to dissent, equality before law are not important, only because they are trapping of nationhood, but because they are essential for social peace and political stability which are needed for economic growth.* As per Marxism-Leninism religion is thus considered superstition and opium of the poor, downtrodden and oppressed people. It is considered as obstacles to the growth of classless society. Hence communism is hostile to religion. It replaced Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism in communist dominated part of world. But Marxist theory, eventually, failed in those society and religions are now all set to come back to those communist societies. *In Indian context, we must have clear vision that almost all political parties have higher caste-Hindus as their leaders and lower caste as their followers. Marxism is no exception to it and hence they are fully impregnated with caste-prejudices in India.*

Now, let us discuss what is religion or Dharma! Religion is not a 'Synonymous' word for Dharma, which is frequently used in context of Hindu or any other religions. *The meaning of word 'Dhar' a verb, etymologically derived for 'Dharma' is to sustain; to uphold; but in total its meaning is rooted in the scriptures, law books (Smriti) the practices of ideal persons and the path shown by them for one's own satisfaction. Because of that different Dharma or religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, Jewish, Jurchism etc. depending on environmental habits and thoughts, came into existence.* In Buddhism, Dharma is called Saddhamma which is not in ordinary sense of religion or Dharma as understood. *It is path shown by Lord Buddha which does not consider the elements of a Omnipotent, Omnipotent or Omnipresent being like 'God, Ishwara or Souls or Atma'. It emphasises on elimination of false or imaginary existence of "Ego" which in fact generates desire in man's mind*

and in turn is the root cause of Dukkha. The complete elimination of egoistic desire leads to 'Nirwana' either in realising or obtaining 'Arhata' or Buddhahood or enlightenment which is the ultimate goal of a person. In the process of achieving this, one has to go through various stages of self-development and development of society. In Buddhism the process of Bodhichitta or 'Boddhisatva Practice' such as Maitri, karuna, Mudita and upekkha paves the way for others' happiness and fulfils it at risk of even one's own life - The Jatak-Kathas is full of such stories wherein it has amply been clarified that for other's happiness and to serve the society Boddhisatva has taken rebirth-in different time at different places and ultimately he was born as Siddharth Gotama who became Buddha.

Ambedkar and Buddhism

In Modern age, we consider and accept *Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar as Bodhisatva*, who sacrificed himself to serve the society, the oppressed, havenots downtrodden. Keeping with the pace of time, he denounced all such facilities like Siddhartha Goutama, which could have easily earn and purchase all the Luxuries available in the world by dint of his scholarship and talent. But, from the stages of his studentship he had a desire to serve the most sufferers and downtrodden due to stigma inflicted on them by casteism of Hindu-religion. He had all promises and effort to take out the sufferers from the undignified living of Hindu Society and right of freedom of taking water from ponds enshrining the fundamental right of equality, justice, fraternity, religious freedom and shares in all fields of country's advancement, socially, politically, economic or otherwise. He proved to be an *undeterred Hero*. He chose the *path of Buddha* and led Millions of people to educate, unite and struggle to achieve the goal and follow the path of Buddha which only shows the social integrity and individual's realisation of self-improvement towards perfection of life, i.e., Buddhahood. He cautioned about amalgamation of Buddhism into Hinduism which proved very costly and certainly will decelerate the process of social integration.

Analysis of Hinduism

Religion - in its dogmatic form particularly the *Hinduism* - cannot be called Humanistic which is based on graded inequality and discrimination. This graded inequality and discrimination is part and parcel of Hindu religion, originated and supported by its religious doctrine and practiced by right from religious leaders like Shankaracharya to ordinary Laity. The Varna or caste system which have no ethical base, is most disintegrating factors in Hinduism. Whatever one tries for communal harmony, (in context with Hindu and Muslims only) is lost in real sense of disintegration, as because the so called Hindus are itself disintegrated. The Varna and caste system itself eataway all efforts in this direction.

It will not be out of place to mention that there are organisations like *Vishwa Hindu Parishad*, *World Buddhist cultural Foundation*, and *fundamentalist militant Hindu Organisations like R.S.S. Shiv Sena and Bhartiya Janta Party*, a political party; which believes in degraded human division not only in their policies and programmes but they implement it in several ways, going against the Fundamental Rights enshrined in our constitution. In various seminars at different places in different countries they carry on the slogans of Hindutva at par with Buddhism and Buddha as 9th reincarnation of mystical imaginary God Vishnu. They do not agree to understand that Lord Buddha himself was a historic-man and denied Hindu way of thinking of any incarnation or rebirth. They carry on the following comparision - as same.

1. Karma and rebirth
2. Soul and Consciousness
3. Mokshas' and Nibbana
4. Par-brahama and Sunyata
5. Incarnation and Lord Buddha.

Here we warn the fanatics of Hindusim as we have done so in the past that any attempt to amalgamate or distort Buddhism with Brahminical cult of unethical and degraded thinking will prove futile, particularly now when the new awakening is taking place and great modern thinker-philosophers of Buddhism is tracing that path. So, they must keep away from such an attempt of re-introducing mutilated and distorted thoughts, far from ethical code of

conduct and physically the degraded social orders. *Rightly said by justice Ramkrishna Ayyer, which runs thus "the abolition of slavery has gone on for a long time. Rome abolished slavery, America abolished it. Also we did, but only the words were abolished, not the things."*

Again to better understand the above statement and to have better social order, its setup and integration of Indian Society, we have to understand Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and there is need of changing the attitude of Orthodox Brahmin, its cult the Varna and caste system or Hindu-religion and acceptance of Dalit or downtrodden in Buddhism in non-prejudice manner. There is need to understand the heritage of Dr. Ambedkar as a great politician, a social reformer and religious revolutionary, a remarkable thinker and scholar; who was extremely knowledgeable about history, economics, sociology, law and religion. His critical analysis of Hindu scriptures, which is now available, is to be estimated. So worth is his contribution as a *father of Indian constitution* and Revival of Buddhism in his book '*Buddha and his Dhamma*' a marvellous deeds as Bodhisatva practice in fact.

The issue of tolerance, secularism, civic values and aspects of liberal tradition are characteristics of the mainstream of national integration and form the core ideals of the Indian state which is at present under severe strain. The core value is incorporated with bewildering array of contradictions. In civic life divergent elements are effectively engraining. Muslim personal law has created the unseen chaos in the country. The middle path of avoiding the religion and rectifying the social order with reforms and ideas of Secularist and communitarian etc. are helpful in social integration. The religious fundamentalists are also shadowing the secular forces which assault the institution of liberal democracy and penetrate the courts, the civil administrative system, Parliament, federalism etc. The terrorist violence in Punjab and Kashmir in the garb of religious minorities is attack on the Indian Democratic values. So is the situation in North-East India in different garb, but religiously motivated.

If we minutely analyse Jubilee Celebration officially in the 50th years of Independance, it would appear that all is not well within Indian democracy. Even the general cynicism towards caste-haterdness remains a bitter truth. The attitude of upper caste towards the downtrodden remains that of concealed hatred. The upper caste mind refuses to come out of its fossilised attitude inheritted from their forefathers. If one's ire is directed against Brahmins, there is strong logic behind it. *The caste system was invented and perpetuated by Bruhmins. The rest of upper castes were just fools tools to put the theory into Practice. The attack on ideological basis of Brahmanism is essential on which the system thrives.*

It is a fact that Jagjivan Ram was unjustly denied Prime Ministership, which he deserved demoratically, just because of his birth in a lower caste, in a age of Democracy and equality. There are numerous examples of such denials against Dalit civil servants and other govt. officials, technocrates etc. working in Public Sectors.

It is true that for more than 2000 year, the upper castes have preached and practiced casteism in a subtle and covert manner, which is obstacle in the path of National Integration.

Conclusion

It is concluded that since inception of history, religion played a significant role in human life in taking not only moral decision but for realization of spiritual level and living experience of divinity within one self and liberation from the ego; cause of generation of intolerance, tension and discord in society; we must effort for the implementation of Universal Declaration of human rights, civil and political right in-spirit and endeavour for total integration by implementation of code of equality, brotherhood, non-discrimination, unjust social and economic order. Further we must have a curb in respect of deep-rooted religious caste-prejudices, fanaticism ethnic centricity; we must keep away politically motivated domination on religious institution and their activities. *Politics without principle, business without ethics,*

education without character, science without spirituality and work without dedication are the negative virtues which the society is impragnated with to-day. All the virtues play a significant role in shaping the society. If the society is enlightened and educated then and only then the integration can be thought of.

If we take such bold steps and implement in spirit the unity, harmony in society will prevail and pave the path of social integration. This will be the only humanistic secularism based on Lord Buddha's call to monks -

Charath Bhikkhve Sadhukan, Bahujan Hitay, Bahujan Sukhay, Lokanukampay.



THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE HIMĀLAYAN BHOṬĪ BUDDHISTS

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The word 'Himālaya' has a very wide connotation, though literally it means 'an abode of snow'.¹ Geographically it is stretched to a very wide range in the east to Arunachal Pradesh bordering Burma; in the west covering the Hindukush in Afganistan; in the north parts of Tibet-China and in the south foot hills of Himālayas in Pakistan, India, Bhutan and Nepal. The great poet Kālidāsa poetically describes it as one which stands as a balance between the two oceans in the east and the west.² Equally great poet Muhammad Iqbal calls it a high mountain whose forehead (i.e., peaks) is being kissed by the sky.³ In today's context, Himālaya is under the political control of different countries and nations. Since we are concerned with the Himālaya of the Indian region, it is appropriate to confine here to the same area. It is now situated in the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, parts of north Bihar and West Bengal, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Union Territories of Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim etc. Here too the regions representing Bhoṭī Buddhist Culture and tradition have shrunk into small pockets namely Ladakh in Jammu & Kashmir, Lahul-Spiti and Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh, Darjeeling and Kalingpong in West Bengal, parts of Assam, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The rest of the Himālayan regions have gone to Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh faiths, though the remnants of the Bhoṭī Buddhist Culture may be cited in those parts as well. The names of the cities like, Shimla, Patiala, Ambala etc. still retain the Bhoṭī suffix 'la' (for indicating respect and honour). It means, in our past history these regions had been under the full control of the Bhoṭī Buddhism.

The words 'Bhoṭī Buddhists' used in the title of the paper, too need some explanation. 'Bhoṭa' was the ancient name of the Tibetan region of

China.⁴ Historically speaking it did remain an independent and sovereign country during some points of time and at other was under the suzerainty of Chinese monarchs and kings. The word Tibet very often used today in cultural, religious and political contexts is simply a dialectical variant of the word Bhoṭa. Since the said regions represent the Bhoṭi culture, religion, language and race, The inhabitants there are called Bhoṭi Buddhists, Some western authors have gone to the extent of describing their religion as Lama or Lamaic Buddhism. But, it appears, they are totally mistaken. All those who swear by the name of the 'Triple Gem' i.e., the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha are Buddhists, some innovations or modifications notwithstanding.

Unfortunately the cultural tradition of the Buddhists of the region has become so vulnerable that the onslaughts of the Hindus, Muslims Christians and Sikhs are being heavily felt by them day in and day out. Ironically enough the Muslims, Christians and Sikhs who are vulnerable to Hindu expansionism in other parts of India seem to be arrayed against Buddhist of the region, along with the Hindus. The Hindu organisations and individuals with their hegemonistic approach are visible enough. Their full and calculated move to wipe out the culture and tradition of the Buddhists of the region is on and in progress. Their onslaught is so heavy that the Buddhists have become completely shaky and are bewildered enough to such an extent that they are running here and there for succour. With the defeat of the Buddhist kingship in Nepal in the wake of the rise of ruling Hindu power, with the departure of the British and emergence of Hindu power in the garb of secularism in New Delhi in 1947, and with the association of Tibet with the Peoples Republic of China in late fifties, the political structure of the region has completely shifted against the Buddhists. Ladakh region which was historically a part of western Tibet had been an independent and sovereign kingdom till 1834. It was conquered and annexed to Jammu kingdom by King Gulab Singh with the help of his Army General Zorawar Singh. With the transfer of power to the Congress rulers of New Delhi in 1947, Ladakh automatically became a part of India, though the representatives of Ladakhi people did dream of joining hand with Tibet, the abode of their ethnically, linguistically, culturally,

religiously and historically common brotherin. Due to lack of confidence and political will, it appears, they failed to raise the issue in any national or international forum. The cleverest of the New Delhi rulers, Jawaharlal Nehru captivated them with his sweet diplomacy. The other regions of the Himālayas which bore common history and affinities with the Tibetan people were also annexed to India by the then British rulers. Hence they too had the same fate with the transfer of power in 1947. Under a treaty with Sikkim Chogyal in 1950, Sikkim remained a protectorate of India till mid-seventies. The same was subsequently merged with India by another New Delhi ruler, though the undemocratic act was opposed by the rival set of Congress leaders like Kamaraj, Morarji Desai, etc. Thus the Buddhist lost finally the political power in the Indian sub-continent, as history of Buddhism suggests, its rise and fall had been interlinked with the political powers all through history.

Under the circumstances, the position of the Buddhists of the region has become like a radderless boat. The main danger for the survival of their religion and culture is from the Hindu side. The Muslims, though weak in the rest of India, are comparatively stronger to Buddhists in Jammu & Kashmir State (they happen to be the nearest neighbour of the Ladakhi people). The Sikhs have at least one region in the country where they share political power with the Hindus. It is a part of old Punjab which was ruled over till very recently by one of their most talented rulers, King Ranjit Singh. Buddhists, on the other hand, are the one who totally lack political backing or leverage of any sort. In this respect, it may also be borne in mind that howsoever secular a political power may be, the profession of its religious faith does influence the people directly or indirectly. It depends upon the degree of commitment and dedication that the religious leaders of a particular period and region possess and the over all circumstances favour or disfavour them.

Historically the situation of the Buddhists started deteriorating considerably since 1947 when Hindu power emerged on the throne of New Delhi. But it may be noted that this process had started even during the British period as the said areas were constantly under cultural attack of the Hindus all around

them, the British rulers being completely oblivious and unconcerned with the cultural and religious developments in the region. After the transfer of power in New Delhi and the reorganisation of states in and around the region, the process of assimilation and absorption of the Buddhists into Hindu fold became quite accelerated. With the rise in the facilities of communication and transportation, the influences of the plains and lower hilly regions started penetrating deep into the hearts of the area. As is the practice all through history, the culture and tradition of the ruling classes percolate automatically and through planned manner among the ruled people, so it occurred here in this region in a big way. Their language of communication and medium of instruction were replaced with Hindi in offices and schools respectively, their dress and costumes were hated upon, their social and political institutions were thrown overboard and reconstituted with those adopted under the new constitution of India and Indian states, newer and newer legislation and enactments were given effect to and other similar/different processes worked so strongly and consistently that the culture and faith of the people became completely shakey and vulnerable day by day. This situation was viewed with alarm by the elders among the Buddhists of the region. Quite naturally they became apprehensive of the speed and force with which the sweeping changes were taking place. They thought that the day was not far-off when they would be thrown overboard and cease to remain what they inherited from their parents. They might lose their identity. This was a clear danger signal for them.

Having come to this realization, the elders (as noted above) and the enlightened ones of the region held seminars and symposia from time to time in order to find ways and means to protect and conserve what they inherited from their forefathers and to enliven and invigorate whatever little that they possessed. Under this scheme, the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies was established years ago (in early fifties) with the blessings of His Holiness Kushok Bakula Rinpoche at Leh (Ladakh) and the Sikkim Institute of Tibetology (its original name was Namgyal Institute of Tibetology) at Gangtok (Sikkim) with the clear instructions from late Prime Minister

Jawaharlal Nehru. The Ladakh Vihar Institute of Higher Learning at Ladakh Vihar, Delhi was the third institute in this context. Venerable Kushok Bakula Rinpoche and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru both were closely associated with the establishment of this institution. These institutions made some impact in the afore-said direction. Collection and preservation of rare manuscripts and tankhas, paving the way for the adoption of modern education to the service of traditional Gonpa system of education and eclesiastical training, exposure of the exclusive and the remotest sections of the people to the instruments of modernisation and so on are some of achievements of these institutions. The seminars and symposia organised by the Leh Institute from time to time provided some impetus to the people in their awakening to the cause of their search for cultural identity.

The example set by the Leh Institute was taken vigorously and in a more pronounced manner by the institutions and individuals in Himachal Pradesh. The spade work in this direction was done long ago during Janata regeme in New Delhi when a special provision was made by the Government of India towards the collection of manuscripts and tankhas on the one hand and repair of Gonpas on the other. A three-day seminar on 'Buddhism in Frontier Regions' was convened in New Delhi. Late Professor Jagannath Upadhyaya had made special efforts in this direction. As a consequence a number of seminars were organised in a succession in various parts of Himachal Pradesh too— the Shimla Seminar in 1985, the Keylong (Lahul Spiti) Seminar in 1986, Rekong Pio (Kinnaur) Seminar in 1987 and lastly the Manali Seminar in 1988 (September). As noted above the running concern of all these seminars has been the constant interest of the border people to protect and preserve their age-old tradition and culture, (including language, literature, art, etc.), the change of venues, sponsoring institutions and organisations, academic themes and scholastic debates not-with-standing.⁵

The aspirations and accomplishments of the latest one which was held at Manali in September 1988⁶ need elaboration and thorough discussion. The plenary sessions of this seminar were livelier than academic sessions. The participation of the local youth and students had obviously made a difference.

The tone and contents of the speeches of the participants were an indication to the changed conditions and moods of the people. The callousness and indifference of the rulers-that-be have undoubtedly been instrumental in this regard. The following resolutions were unanimously passed after prolonged debate and discussion –

1. That all languages and dialects of the Bhoṭi Buddhist regions of the Himalayas be named Bhoṭi Bhāṣā (Language) and the Bhoṭi language be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

The Himālayan people of Ladakh, Lahul-Spiti, Kinnaur, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, etc. speak a language of the Tibeto-Mangolian Family of Languages with dialectical variants here and there. But they name it differently. At places it is called Ladakhi, Bodhi, Bhoti, Tibetan and so on. Let it be given one name, i.e., Bhoṭi Bhāṣā (language).

The languages of the major nations and nationalities of our great country are included in the said Schedule. Even an ancient language has also found a place therein. There are some very glaring omissions. The case of Bhoṭi language falls in this category. It appears that all those languages which were either unrepresented, ill-represented or deliberately ignored in the Constituent Assembly, did not find their place there.

Bhoṭi Bhāṣā (language) is spoken by a large number of Tibeto-Mongoloid people in a very vast area extending from Ladakh in the north to Arunachal Pradesh in the North-east except some gaps in between. The people of the region fear, if the language is not protected by the state in time, it may die its own death very soon, as the only source of its sustenance, i.e., Gonpa institution, is fast deteriorating due to socio-economic and political reasons. Hence plea for its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule.

2. That Bhoṭi language be given its suitable place in the University/ College curricula and Public Service Commissions (Union and States).

Bhoṭi language has been so far neglected in the scheme of higher education of the country. It is, therefore, suggested that Bhoṭi be introduced in undergraduate, post-graduate and research units of the Universities and

Colleges of the country. Secondly its non-representation in Public Service Commissions at the Centre and the States is equally disadvantageous to the Bhoṭī-speaking people. They are, thus, forced to attempt their answers in the languages other than their own. Their failure to complete proportionately i.e., below their fixed quota in all competitive examinations may be explained in this very factor.

3. That Bhoṭī language be declared as the medium of instruction and examination in all schools and colleges of these regions of the country and that it be taught as a compulsory subject in all classes from primary to College/ University level. It is further resolved that Bhoṭī language be included in the Three-language Formula being implemented all over the country.

It is a misfortune that Bhoṭī language is not taught as a subject in even schools of the region. It should immediately be given that status. Secondly it should be accepted as medium of instruction and examination in all schools and colleges of the regions.

The natural corollary to the above contention would be that Bhoṭī language be included in the Three-language Formula. In other words the students of the region may have the option to choose one foreign language and one Indian language besides Bhoṭī language to complete the number three.

4. That a Bhoṭī Buddhist Institute of Higher Learning and Research be established at Manali and that it be named after late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It is further resolved that pending the establishment of the aforesaid Institute Bhoṭī teachers be recruited immediately to take up the task of teaching in schools after a tentative examination of the standard of Matriculation.

The necessity of Teaching and Research Institute is felt by all as it is necessary for the protection and promotion of the language and culture of the regions. The problem of immediate recruitment of teachers to cope with the teaching work in the event of the faithful implementation of resolution no. 3 be resolved by introducing a system of tentative examination of Matric

standard. This will solve the problem of probable shortage of teachers on the one hand and provide impetus to the growth of the language on the other.

5. That the Gonpa Educational Institutions be given parity with the Colleges and Universities of the country in the matters of recognition of their degrees, financial aid and pay-scales of the teachers and non-teaching staff.

The Gonpas had been centres of education and learning since the introduction of Gonpa system. The majority of them enroll and educate students from primary to University level. Some even impart teaching for the Geshe (highest) degree. As regards their financial condition, on the other hand, they are, by and large, in a very bad shape. They may improve their performance, position and standard, if they are treated at par with Universities and Colleges of the country in respect of recognition of their degrees, provision of financial aids and implementation of pay scales.

6. That the Ladakh Institute of Higher Education which was established in Ladakh Vihar, Delhi in 1963 and which functioned for some years thereafter be brought back to life and activities.

The said Institute was established with the blessings of late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and His Holiness Kushok Bakula Rinpoche for the clearcut purpose of imparting higher education to the boys and girls of the Himalayan regions who were and still are left in the lurch due to break in their past connections with their spiritual and religious centres in Tibet and Mongolia. But unfortunately due to certain undesirable developments, the Institute deteriorated over the years and was ultimately reduced to a Higher Secondary School. Since the need of such an institution is ever-increasing, it be revived again and be made a real centre of Traditional Higher learning for the students of Himalayan regions.

7. That an academy of Bhoṭi language, literature, art and culture be established in Himachal Pradesh and that Bhoṭi be included in the list of languages recognised by the Sahitya Academy, New Delhi.

For the preservation and promotion of Bhoṭi language, literature, art and culture, it is necessary that it be given the same privileges as are available

to the other recognised languages of the country. This goal may be achieved in two ways - by the establishment of a seperate and exclusive academy of Bhoṭī language, literature, art and culture and secondly by the recognition of Sahitya Academy, New Delhi.

8. That the scholars of Bhoṭī language be given similar honour and recognition as the teachers of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian get every from the President of India.

It is a misfortune that the Bhoṭī language is not given the same treatment as is given to Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. This step-motherly treatment by the Central Government is highly deplorable. It is, therefore, suggested that the scholars of Bhoṭī language be given the same honour and recognition as the scholars of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian are being offered every year.

9. That the recommendation of the Minorities Commission be accepted in recognising Bhoṭī language as a language for communication in District administration. Bhoṭī language is confined to certain districts and states in the country. In view of this fact, the language policy be so evolved that the languages of linguistic minorities be given the honour of being the languages of administration. The position of Bhoṭī language is so in certain districts and pockets in the country. Thus Bhoṭī language be used for the purpose in Ladakh, Lahul-Spiti, Kulu-Manali, Kinnaur, Darjeling-Kālingpong, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. All the recommendations of the Minorities Commission in this respect should be accepted in full.

10. That a bureau of translators under the Central Government be established which should be entrusted with the task of translating all the available Tibetan texts into Hindi.

In the past, it was the practice of the Governments in Tibet that they used to establish bureau of translators (including Indian Panditas) for the purpose of translating Sanskrit/Pali texts into Tibetan language. The same practice be followed now in translating those and many other texts into Hindi. This tremendous task can be completed only with a team spirit and not

individually. The Central Government should come forward to establish such a bureau of translators. The venue of the bureau be either at Leh (Ladakh) or Keylong (Lahul-Spiti) or Gangtok (Sikkim) or Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh).

11. That the Amchi Medical College at Manali be given full financial assistance either by the Central or Himachal Pradesh Government.

The Amchi Medical College was established at Manali in 1977 in order to impart education and training to the youth of the Himalayan regions where Amchi System is still practised. The Government of Himachal Pradesh provides a sum of Rs. 35,000/- (rupees thirty five thousands) only annually to run the institution. It is quite inadequate. In view of this fact and on realization that Amchi System of treatment is very useful to the people of the Himalayan regions, the Government at the Centre and the State be persuaded to provide more grant to the said institution. It will serve two purposes – giving training to larger number of youth who will in their turn provide medical treatment to the poor and needy people of the Himalayan regions and secondly preserving and promoting one of the most important and vital items of the culture of the Himalayan people.

12. That a Committee be constituted which should be entrusted with the task of accomplishing the aforesaid aims and objects.

The participants in the Seminar were unanimous and emphatic on the point that a Committee be constituted at an early date with the clear-cut task of supervising the work, reviewing and evaluating the progress made in this direction. It is very necessary for the fulfillment of the task as reflected in the resolutions cited above.

To conclude the Bhoṭī Buddhists (if such a term be allowed to be coined) are up for the accomplishment of their goal, i.e. preservation of their cultural identity and promotion of their status and position. They are prepared to fight for their cause through all peaceful means, as citizens of India, though culturally and ethnically they belong to the Tibeto-Mongoloid stock whose seat of power lies (not in the form of Buddhist hierarchy) beyond the boundaries of India today.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. **Himālaya** - Hima + ālaya (hima, snow and ālaya, abode). This is how Himālaya has been described in ancient literature. Some Buddhist texts, designate it as Himavanta, i.e. weilder of snow.
2. **Kumārasambhava** of Kālidāsa, canto I, versa I.
Astyuttarasyaṃ diśi devatāmā Himālayo nāma nagādhirājaḥ,
Pūrvāparao toyanidhī vagāhya sthitaḥ pṛthivyāmiva mānadaṇḍaḥ.
3. Poet Iqbal's famous poem on the Himālayas –
Ai Himālā, Ai safīle kiśvare Hindostān,
Terī peśānī ko hardam cūmatā hai āsmān.
4. cf. the name of the great Minister and scholar, Thonmi Sambhota, i.e. good Bhoṭa.
5. The Shimla Seminar, 1985 was held under the auspices of the Himachal Pradesh Academy of Languages and Culture, the one at Keylong under the auspices of Budha Darshan Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Keylong, The next one at Rekonig Pio under Chos Khor Lin Baudha Seva Sangha, Kinnaur and the recent one at Manali again under Baudha Darshan Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Keylong.
6. From the 20th to 24th September 1988. The Seminar was inaugurated by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama on the 20th September. Apart from scholars from different parts of the country, the seminar was attended by local youth as well. As many as 25 research papers were presented to the Seminar. A Souvenir edited by Professor Sanghasen Singh of Delhi University, Delhi was released by his Holiness the Dalai Lama during the inauguration session. As many as twelve resolutions concerning the burning issues of the Bhoṭī Buddhists were unanimously passed during one of the plenary sessions of the Seminar.



SPIRITUAL HUMANISM IN THE PRESENT DAY WORLD

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Humanism insists on human welfare and spiritualism is rising above the concerns of the materialistic world. Spiritual humanism works for the welfare of the humanity through the awakening of wisdom. In other words, spiritual humanism endeavours to make the individual better humanbeing and the society better human society. Buddhism works for the elimination of suffering through the attainment of wisdom (Pragna). In this process the individual transcends the level of suffering and attains Nirvana, a state of freedom and bliss.

The present day world is threatened by fundamentalism and communalism. Fundamentalism is a negative attitude arising out of illusory threats to ones own beliefs and customs.

Communalism spearates groups of individuals on the basis of religious beliefs, customs and practices. Fundamentalism and communalism together are responsible for the cropping up of many religious denominations and organisations with restrictive rules and regulations. These fundamental and communal froces thereby generate divisions in society, sometimes leading to different social and religious groups fighting against one an other. Buddhism based on humanism and realism is in dire need as a counter balancing force so that the human society - learns to live in amity as one community.

Religions, other than Buddhism also profess to care for human welfare. But these systems bring in divine element unknown and incomprehensible. The Advaita Vedanta for instance, speaks of the universe as the

divine manifestation. Christianity emphasises on divine grace, and it should be the pious duty of every individual to function as directed by the Divinity. These are just two examples of the many religious beliefs emphasising on divinity. Here, the individual is subordinated to the divine. In these systems the divine workings are either mechanical or fanciful. But, Buddhism does not countenance a whimsical divine element behind the functioning of the universe. Buddhism therefore is not only humanistic but also realistic.

Buddhism does not believe in dogma. The Buddha himself has said, "Tatagatha is free from all theories. Buddha dharma springs from accepting the fundamental fact of sorrow and suffering in human life and preaches the way of eliminating the dukkha. This emphasis on the fundamental fact of human life has a universal appeal and so are the methods prescribed for overcoming the dukkha. It is this appeal to fundamental facts of human mystery and the remedies offered therefore have helped Buddhism to transcend physical and cultural barriers and to spread across lands and seas. Today's world is beset by fundamental and communal feelings and sentiments. The universal appeal of Buddhism would be the right antidote against the restrictive and divisive forces in human society. The Buddhist appeal is universal simply because the approach is rational.

The Buddhist preachings even in the ancient days some 2500 years ago were against religious fundamentalism. The Buddha said, "revere your own, revile no brother's faith". Directed by the same nobility of thought the Buddhist kings like Asoka showered liberal donations on Brahmanas and Sramanas, the latter including the Jains and the Ājivikas." Asoka for instance says in his 12th Rock Edict "Whosoever raises his own sect to the sky and disparages all other sects from special attachment to his own with a view to encourage it, does thereby much harm to his own sect". Examples of this kind are available not only in this country but even elsewhere in Ceylon and Burma.

The noble eightfold path enunciating Virtue (Sila) Concentration (Samadhi) and Wisdom (Pragna) is a practical approach to building up social

harmony. Samadhi and Pragna flow from the cultivation of Virtue. The Buddha says, "Virtue is the base on which the man who is wise can train his mind and make his Wisdom grow..... . This is the base like great earth to man..... ." The present day world lacks Virtue defined as Samma Vacha (right speech) Samma Kammanata (right action) and Samma Jiva (right livelihood). Cultivation of Sila by individuals and societies should be able to put an end to social and religious tensions. The need for cultivating Sila should now be truly felt than ever before, because science and technology have armed the human society with powerful weapons of mass destruction. The more the concentration of power, the more is the need for cultivation of forbearance and the latter is possible only through the practice of the noble eightfold path. In these days of power struggles and greed for material gains, the noble eightfold path should strike as saviour of humanity.

The rational mind of the present day world does not accept irrational and superstitious beliefs and practices. Accepting that there is need for religion as a restraining force in these days of power conflicts. The only religion that should be satisfying is Buddhism.

If modern technology has lead to power concentration, it is more concentrated in the western half of the hemisphere. Power concentration and human ego that goes with it are a dangerous phenomenon fraught with catastrophic consequences unless tempered by religious concerns. Power concentration has been steadily building up in the western countries ever since 18th century. As science and technology gained the upper hand, religion fell in disfavour in the same measure, so that now we observe vacuum of religious faith prevailing among the western populations. Christianity is unable to raise to the occasion as a modifying factor because of its emphasis on divine grace. Divinity and divine grace are an aversion to the egoist mind cultivated by technological achievements. There is a developing feeling that the human being is the master of the universe, its creator as also its destroyer. Before this feeling of self supremacy dominates the western mind remedial steps have to be undertaken in the interest of the entire human race. Buddhism would be the right answer for this explosive situation.

Already beginnings have been made and Buddhism for sometime, has been gaining momentum in several of the western countries. In England and Germany, a serious study of the Buddhist texts began in 19th century. A notable effort in this direction was the publication of "Maha Vamsa" by Turner in 1837. T.W. Rhys Davids was another renowned scholar who devoted a life time for the study of Pali and Buddhism. His wife Madam Poley Rhys Davids, a great scholar in her own right gave immense support to her husband. The starting of the Pali text society and the publication of the dictionary of Pali language are the two turning points which created an awareness for Buddhism in Western countries. The great German scholar Max Muller made no mean contribution by publishing Buddhist texts as a part of the sacred books of the East series. A German translation of Dhammapada appeared in 1860 AD. Burnouf and Sylvan levi were the two great names among the French scholars who did much for the cause of Buddhism. In USA, the Harward Oriental series created interest in Buddhism. In 1907, the Buddhist society of Great Britain and Ireland was started with the pious objective of spreading the message of the Buddha. But it is important to note that till middle of the 20th century, the study of Buddhism in the west was confined to a few serious researchers but since then the interest of the west has been undergoing a change. Today in many of the cities France, Germany, England and USA, there are Buddhist societies and meditation centres which ever undertake to publish scholarly journals and books. We now find in the west Buddhism being studied not only out of scholarly interest but also is practices as a living faith. People are now interested not only in the teachings of the Buddha but also in the Buddhist meditation Vipassana. It is interesting to note that Buddhism is fast spreading to the Scandinavian countries at one end and Australia at the other. It is easy to see the Buddhism is fast gaining strength in the west to fillup the religious vacuum and is able to emotionally satisfy the western mind.

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ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF TANTRIC BUDDHISM IN ANCIENT BENGAL

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The geographical area of 'Ancient Bengal' includes the vast tract of land which stretches from the Himalaya in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the south, and from the Brahmaputre, the Kamsa, the Surma, and the Šajjuk rivers in the east to the Nagar, The Barakar, and the lower reaches of the Suvarnarekha in the West. Thus the territory of Ancient Bengal lies roughly between 27°9" and 20°5" north latitude and 86°35" and 92°30" east longitude. Since the partition of India in 1947 this region has, however, been known as two distinct political units, namely, West Bengal which is one of the States of India, and East Pakistan which is now called Bangladesh. Some of the ancient kingdoms of Bengal were Gauda, Pundravardhana, Samatata, Tamralipta, Karnasuvarna, Harikela, Candradvips, Vanga, Vanigata and Radha. In this discussion we have taken into account all these territories which are now located in West Bengal and Bangladesh.

At the present stage of our knowledge we are not in a position to determine, without any doubt, the period when Buddhism was introduced in Ancient Bengal. But it is an accepted fact that Buddhism was not prevalent there during the life-time of Lord Buddha. However in the pre-Asokan works it became evident that Buddhism had already gained its foundation at least in North Bengal at a period prior to the accession of Asoka. This fact was further corroborated by the missionary activities of Asoka in the appropriate passages of the Divyavadana, a Buddhist Sanskrit text, and the itinerary of Hiuent-sang.

It is interesting to note that a schismatic sect of the Buddhists, namely, the Chavaggiya or the 'Band of six Men', had probably their settlements in

Ancient Bengal. B.M. Barua remarked, on the basis of the Mauryan Brahmi Inscription of Mahasthan that this community was settled in Pundranagara as early as the Maurya period. During the third century B.C. Ancient Bengal became a part of the empire of Asoka and at that period a Buddhist mission was probably despatched to this territory. The success of such a mission was assured and results were more encouraging than expected. But after the decline of the Mauryan empire and the usurpation of the throne of Magadha by Puryamitra, Buddhism faced extreme hard days in North Bengal. It may be noted that at a period when Buddha's religion was adding to its strength by the conversion of the Indo-Bactrian King Menander to Buddhism, Puryamita began to persecute all those who did not conform to the orthodox Brahmanical faith and to destroy the Buddhist monasteries in Ancient Bengal. Besides, the two votive inscriptions discovered at Sanchi of the second century B.C. recorded the gifts of two inhabitants of Punavardhana which was evidently Pundravardhana of the literary sources. The Dipavamsa related a fable of the daughter of the kind of Vanga cohabiting with a lion. This fable may simply mean that one of the Northerners (who were called Lions) carried off a native girl and cohabited with her. From this union sprang the thirty two brothers, of whom the eldest ones were Vijaya and Sumeta. But Ancient Bengal was not included in the list of Indian seats of Theravada Buddhism, from which, according to the Mahavamsa, the eminent Buddhist monks visited Sri Lanka with a view to attending the ceremony of consecration for the Mahastupa erected in the first century B.C. by Dutthagamani, the king of Sri Lanka. We obtain, however, the first definite reference to Vanga as a living centre of Buddhism during the second or third century A.D. in the Nagarjunakonda Inscription which included Vanga in a long list of countries converted to Buddhism by the monks of Sri Lanka. Thus the country of Vanga became gradually a stronghold of Buddhism. In the Sanskrit text entitled Asokavadana we find that a daughter named Sumagadha of Anathapindada, the banker of Sravasti, was married to a young man of Pundravardhana. It was further recorded that at that time there was no Buddhist in Pundravardhana. Sumagadha being disgusted of obscene behaviour of the naked jaina monks and in order

to convert her husband and his relatives began to recall Buddha in meditation. Strangely enough on the next day, Buddha Himself with His five Hundred disciples appeared in Pundravardhana and accepted the hospitality of Sumagadha. Having heard of the arrival of Buddha the inhabitants of that country quickly gathered around him in order to worship the Blessed one. In the Bodhisattvavadana composed by Ksemendra, the great poet of Kaśmir, of the 11th Century A.D. was included a story entitled Sumagadhavadana which recorded that the husband of Sumagadha was Vrsabhadatta. But the Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang of 1747 A.D. refers to a Woman called Magadhabhadra who sent invitation to Buddha for visiting Iksuwardhana (Pundravardhana ?). In the travelogue of Hiuen-tsang there is no mention of Sumagadha, but this Chinese pilgrim also noted that Buddha Himself visited Pundravardhana, Samatata, and Karnasuvaran and Preached His doctrines to the heretics and at all these places Asoka, the emperor, erected three stupas in order to commemorate this singular event. But apart from these later texts, the earliest Buddhist literature did not record any such information. Besides, among the early disciples of Buddha probably there was none who belonged to Ancient Bengal.

Buddhism held its sway over Ancient Bengal under the Kusana Kings also. It may be presumed that North Bengal formed a part of the Kusana empire as a result of the conquest of Pataliputra by Kaniska. The Kusana coins discovered in this region also testify to this fact. It is quite probable that Kanisaka's reign initiated a period of calm and prosperity for the Buddhists in Ancient Bengal. But between Kanisha and the appearance of the Gupta Kings the history of Buddhism in Ancient Bengal is still in darkness for want of sufficient evidence. Yet one of the old centres of Buddhist culture seemed to be the fort of Candrar Varman of the fourth century A.D., the earthen ramparts of which enclosed a thickly populated tract of land $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in area. The fort was situated in the southern portion of Faridpur district of East Bengal. A statue of Avalokitesvara fished out from the Silaidaha river belonged to that period. Besides, a number of other images, beautiful copper lotus with moving

petals the big image of Gautam Buddha in black stone and the statute of Marici may be dated the 10th Century A.D. Thus it may be concluded that from probably the 4th to 10th Century A.D. Buddhism found a congenial home at least in this locality. Still due to meagre archaeological evidences from Ancient Bengal we, at the present stage for our knowledge, cannot get any idea of the condition of Buddhism during the early centuries of the Christian era in this part of Ancient India.

The flourishing state of Buddhism in Ancient Bengal at the commencement of the Gupta period show that the religion of Buddha was firmly established in sundry towns and villages of Ancient Bengal. We are told that Fa-hien, the Chinese Pilgrim, who travelled over India at the beginning of the fifth century A.D. did not cross the Ganga to visit North Bengal, but as he came down eastwards along the course of the Ganga, he noticed on the southern bank of the river the great kingdom of Campa, with stupas erected at the places which were associated with memory of Gautama Buddha and his predecessors and where some Buddhist monks still used to dwell. He observed twenty-two monasteries at Tamralipta. In this travelogue it was recorded : "Following the course of the Ganges, and descending eastwards for eighteen yojanas, he (Fa-hien) found on the southern bank the great kingdom of Campa, with topes reared at the places where Buddha walked in meditation by His vihara and where He and the three Buddhas, His predecessors, sat. There were monks residing at them all. Continuing his journey east for nearly fifty yojanas, he came to the country of Tamralipti, (Tamralipta the capital of which is) a seaport. In the country there are twenty-two monasteries, at all of which there are monks residing. The Law of Buddha is also flourishing in it. Here Fa-hien stayed two years, writing out his Sutras, and drawing pictures of images. After this he embarked in a large merchant-vessel, and went floating over the sea to the south-west. It was the beginning of winter, and the wind was favourable; and, after fourteen days, sailing day and night, they came to the country of Singhala (i.e., Sri Lanka). The people said that it was distant (from Tamralipta) about 700 Yojanas, "It is gratifying to note that the

information supplied by Fa-hien was corroborated to a great extent by the archaeological records belong to the Gupta age. Thus the Gunaighar (in the Tippera district) Grant dated 188 of the Gupta era, 506 or 507 A.D., of the reign of the Saiva ruler Maharaja Vainyagupta, recorded the grant of land in favour of the Avaivarttika Sangha of the Mahayana School. The monks of the Sangha which was initiated by Acarya Santideva, were then residing in the Asrama Vihara dedicated to Arya Avalokitesvara and founded by Rudradatta. In the same grant it was further stated that there were at that time two other Buddhist monasteries in the neighbourhood. One of such viharas was called the Raja Vihara or the Royal Monastery. Thus the grant revealed that Buddhism already by the commencement of the sixth century A.D. gained solid foundation even in the remotest south-eastern corner of Ancient Bengal.

But Sasanka who sometime before 606 A.D become the king of Gauds with his capital at Karnasurarna which had been identified with Rangamati, six miles south-west of Berhampur in the Murshidabad district, and initiated numerous acts of oppression against the Buddhists. Hiuentasang, the Chinese Pilgrim, recorded that Sansanka exterminated Buddhism, expelled the Buddhists from a vihara in Kusinagara, threw into the Ganges a stone containing foot-prints of Buddha in Pataliputra, cut down the Bodhi Tree destorying its roots down to the water, burned what remained and attempted to remove an image of Buddha and replaced it by that of Siva. This Pilgrim further noted that Harsa ascended the throne to raise "Buddhism from the ruin into which it has been brought account of by the king of Karna-suvarna." Thus it is evident that Buddhism in Ancient Bengal during the seventh century suffered a great set-back on account of the activities of Sansanka who destroyed the convents and dispersed the bhikkhus, continuing his persecution across the Nepalese hills.

Besides, some other Chinese records belonging to the seventh century supply us interesting information about the condition of Buddhism in Ancient Bengal. But among these, the travelogue of Hiuen-tsang is, however, of prive value. Hiuen-tsang visited almost all important Buddhist centres of contempo-

rary Ancient Bengal and made profitable remarks on them. He, during his visit to this territory in A.O. 638-639, noticed about seventy Buddhist monasteries with about 8,000 monks, while the deva temples numbered 300 in the neighbourhood. On a general estimate the Mahayanists were only a fourth of the total number of Buddhists in Ancient Bengal.

Curiously enough, no mention was made of Vanga in Hiuen-tsang's travelogue, though he might have traversed this region on his way from Samatata to Tamralipta. Hiuen-tsang further recorded that he observed at Kajangala which is identified with Kankjol near Rajmahal, six or seven viharas where more than three hundred Buddhist monks used to dwell, and, in his own words, "in the northern part of the country, not far from the Ganges, was a lofty belvedere built of stone and brick, its base was broad and high, and its artistic ornamentation was exquisite; on each of its sides were carved images of holy beings, the Buddhas and the devas being made different in appearance."



THE BUDDHIST VIEW ON KĀMA

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It is needless to emphasise that **Kāma** has played a dominant role in the Buddhist ethico-religio philosophical outlook. Like many other ethical and spiritual adherents, the Buddhist attitude toward, **Kāma** is, by and large, estimated as negative, "On the cessation of **Kāmanā** there is the cessation of **dukha**" is the well known Buddhist assertion. But the point is : what is the nature of **Kāma** that is focussed in Buddhism, especially in its early phase. The concept : **Kāmanā** is closely related with **Kāma** that is derived from the root '**Kāmu**' meaning to desire. Thus **Kāmanā/Kāma** in the context of the Buddhist thought stands for desire/wish. Here the sense of craving or yearning seems to be the core tone of emphasis.

I

The Buddhist view of **samsāra** is of ceaseless change and suffering and release (**nibbāna**) is attained by gradual growth of psycho-physical, discipline. It gives sole importance on man's individual capacity and virtue and thereby suggests "By oneself is evil avoided, and by oneself is purified. Purity and impurity depend upon oneself; no one can purify another"¹ says the **Dhammapada**. Human being according to the Buddhist stand, consists of two sides the physical element (**rūpa**) and the mental element (**nāma**). In its relation with the external realm, man develops six cognitive faculties, namely, vision, audition, smell, taste, touch and consciousness. Through these he is attracted towards sense objects and desires enjoyment (**assāda**). But, because of transitoriness (**aniccā**) of both objects and enjoyment the man suffers. In consequence, man endeavours a detached perspective and attains enlightenment (**nissaraṇa**) - says the **Saṃyutta Nikāya**².

It is held (The **Āṅguttara Nikāya**) that all pleasures of senses are transient (**Sabbe kāmā aniccā**)³ In the same line the **Majjhima Nikāya** states that desire really brings diverse sufferings and cravings (**kama appassādā bahu dukkhā bahupāyāsā**)⁴. In this context, the Buddhist distinction between **pema** and **mettā** is worth noting. **Pema**, i.e. carnal love or selfish desire is not **metta** which means friendship without sensual love and attachment. It is only by proper awareness (**jhāna**), says the **Āṅguttara Nikaya**, one becomes free from different forms of sensual desire.⁵

There are number of source references wherein it is noticed that Buddhism is found to be very critical about desire of any sort. All desires are rooted in some form of selfishness and that, in turn, is grounded in a strong sense of egoity or self-centredness. That is why, it is held by Buddhism that to think 'This is mine' (**etaṃ mama**) is to be in the grip of craving (**tanhā**) and to think 'I am this' (**eso aham asmi**) is to be in the grip of pride (**lobha**). According to Buddhism, sensuality checks intellectual awareness. Mental concentration (**cittasa ekaggatā**) is possible by the control of senses. It is said that **Arahat** is **akiñcana** (without any possession) and, as such, he is free from **dukkha**. He has no sensuous desire ("**akiñcana kāmabhava asatto**" the **Saṃyutta Nikāya**)⁶.

Since, desire is viewed as arresting mental or intellectual alertness, it is taken as more bent upon emotion than on volition. For Buddhism, desire is neither intellectually nor spiritually tenable. It arrests both intellectual and spiritual progress. **Kāmabhāva** or sense of desire is regarded as obstacle for intellectual, moral and spiritual awakening.

II

All these brief references from the Buddhist source reveal that a distinct type of psychological discipline and control are, all through, prescribed and are insisted upon. For the attainment of peaceful state, free from sorrows and sufferings, neither material comfort is sought for nor any metaphysical research is aspired. It can be accomplished by means of inner intuitive apprehension. That is done by a distinct form of psychic therapy

where one is to control the senses by means of rigorous mental balance. Buddhism continuously avoids blind faith in spiritual quest. One's faith is no guarantee that what is believed to be true is really true. There is every possibility that the firm faith or belief may be false or baseless. Buddhism, it is said, does not deny the empirical state and never advocates any supra-empirical metaphysical state of reality. It only strikes to suggest that the same fact remains both for ordinary experience of layman and also for the enlightened. But the difference between the two consists only on the way it is known or revealed by them. Here it is, of course, to be noted that experience, to Buddhism, is not confined to sense; it is wider in so far as it includes the inner meditative experience through yoga. But the yogic experience is not claimed as supernatural but as deeply psychological.

III

From the aforesaid brief outline, it is clear that Buddhism is very critical about desire. It is of firm conviction that all empirical phenomena carry pain and suffering if there are viewed with the psychological attitude of craving. Thus it is clear that the Buddhistic message is to change the psychological attitude from attachment to detachment, from possession to non-possession, from selfish desire to universal friendship. The procedure that is prescribed for reaching the state of desirelessness is claimed to be neither mystical nor metaphysical but psychological. Buddhism gives sole emphasis on the change of mental attitude and that would, according to it, definitely redress sorrows and suffering.

But the question remains with regard to the conceivability of the state of desirelessness. Ordinarily one desires at something and due to some other factor, withdraws his desire from that thing and moves on to something else as the object of desire. As long as man is there, he continues to have desire on one thing on the other. Though there is change of desire from one to the other, never there is complete cessation of desire. In this context, let us take the instance of the Buddhist anecdote concerning the mother Gautamī. It is true that being very much emotionally upset on account of the sad death of

only son, the mother was mentally imbalanced and was not able to accept the fact that dead one can never be alive. She was unable to face the actuality on account of being a victim to high voltage of emotional upsurge. So at that critical situation, Buddha's tactful handling was definitely rewarding. It was most consoling as well as effective in bringing back the emotionally charged mother to the state of cool balanced reason. She became normal and faced the world without any set back. But does this state of normalacy mean that she is fully desire-free ? To be normal virtually means that one is the adopt himself with changing circumstance. Even to more for the welfare of others having no selfish motive and intention can be viewed as not completely desire-free. In this context, it may be noted that for the Vedāntins, there is in man a specific desire called **mumukṣā** (the desire for mouṣe). It reveals that mouṣe even is regarded as object of desire. While **mokṣa** is later on found to be much away from the level of commonality and is thus transcendental, **puruṣārtha** (the goal of life) is interpreted as the balanced integration of the other three well known **vargas**, namely; **dharma**, **artha** and **kāma**. Manu, the famous **Smṛtikāra** declared the fulfilment of these three ends as **sreya** or the most valuable.

It seems therefore quite sound to maintain that complete or absolute cessation of desire is, at least, not practically feasible. Its theoretical basis also remains not unquestinable. But does this imply the outmoded character of the Buddhist point of view ? Its emphasis on cessation of **kāma** is, therefore, looked at by certain critics as an unwarranted move. Probably that is the reason why in certain dominant circle the Buddhist prescription, in this regard, is treated as negative and pessimistic. Its message is, hence, viewed as impractical and is of no consequence for man in the modern setting.

I think, a closer look to the sayings of the Buddha and exploring its rational implication is very much needed for a proper, unprejudiced and non-dogmatic reading of the Buddhist point of view. The spirit of the Buddhist sayings need not be taken literally. For a proper rendering, it seems, a symbolic or suggestive meaning is preferable. There is overtone of sensuality and craving for satisfaction of carnal desires, is the necessity of a meaningful

check of the whole enterprise. Under the pressure of desire, the amoreist is likely to ignore his duties and responsibilities and consequently brings difficulties both for himself as well as for others. One, of course, cannot be absolutely free from desire, but that does not imply that one cannot control desire and passion. A regulated and balanced functioning of desire is not only rationally convincing but it is also conducive to peace and happiness. Such flow of desire is not life-negating but rather life-affirming. That can never be the mark of one escapist attitude but, on the contrary, is more to contribute a positive and meaningful not to life here and now.

If viewed from this perspective, the Buddhist critical reflection on **Kāma** need not raise any apprehension. It can be seen as a practical move of having definite empiric significance. Thus Buddha's message in the psychological plane is neither directed towards any metaphysical nor any mystical transcendence. It is firmly rooted in natural and empirical setting having a profound moral and ethical significance. The moral sense is not simply aimed at individual purification of course the individual gets peace and tranquility by the control of desire and sensuality. But that also turns out to be beneficial to the community or society at large. It promulgates individual progress as well as social solidarity. Perhaps, that is one of the major factors, because of which the Buddhistic ethico-religious philosophical message, despite its apparently rigid and rigorous ethical and moral code, was well taken up by the elites and also the masses and Buddhism consequently crossed the boundaries of India and earned international fame. So the prescription of truth and non-violence, control of desires and sense-cravings were not found to be practically implausible and meaningless. Only when there was full and decadence from this noble path and procedure. Buddhism, in this country became somewhat sloth and inactive. But that never undermines the inner strength and profundity of the Buddhist message. Its attitude towards **Kāma**, from this angle of vision, is surely worth pursuing.

The move from attachment to detachment possession to non-possession etc. does not suggest absolute denial of either attachment or possession.

It only means a balanced control and check. Because uncontrolled move in any of these direction would be not only unethical but also would turn out to be arresting peace and progress, both in the individual and social front. There are number of stories and anecdotes in the Buddhist sources to substantiate such a point of view. Absolutism, in any form, seems to have been not favoured in this context.

If seen and evaluated from this perspective, the Buddhist attitude towards *kāma* can be regarded as quite relevant at the modern setting amidst the present day international relations and state-of-affairs. The hostile relations between Israel and Palestine, between Iraq and U.S.A., between Tibet and China show to what extent the political leaders clash with each other and consequently to what magnitude the common people at large suffer. The sense of egoistic pride and jealousy at other's welfare seem to be a major force at the background for such type of acute differences and hostility. So far as policy of nuclear disarmament is concerned, some super powers want to introduce the nuclear base policy which is again found to be discriminative in nature. Because complete disarmament would imply the loss of their superiority at least from the military point of view. There is thus the rise of unhealthy rivalry among the other nations either to bring out or to evolve nuclear technology and utilise the same for military purpose, if not publicly at least secretly. The root of all these lies in mutual distrust and misbelief. The sense of egoistic pride, of course, works underneath. It is not simply the desire for self preservation, but it also is supplemented by the desire to move to the higher rank and to vindicate ones superiority over others. It is not guided by the slogan that 'I live and let others live' but by the opposing tendency 'I alone live with pride and dignity vindiating my superiority over others'. 'Nothing other than I being the topper is admissible. I have to achieve it by hook or by crook.

Now the sense of going higher, rising even to the top level is not in itself undesirable. It is legitimately preferable. But when such psychological attitude becomes tied down with the egoistic sense of pride and jealousy, there is the beginning of unwarranted hatred and hostility. These gives rise to mutual disbelief and unnecessary psychological tension and worries causing

thereby difficulty both to the difenders and also to the offenders. All this today happens both in political and socio-cultural dimension because of a deep-rooted moral crisis. The modern man is, by and large, more leaning toward, ego-centricity and his concern for others is limited only at the level of commercial prudentialism and never on the solid foundation of moral concern. It is the lack of moral or ethical attitude which seems to be a dangerous challanging force against the very survival of humanity.

And, it is here the Buddhistic message for subjugating and controlling desire is found to be quite significant. It seems to have never opposed to minimum and required sense of desire for a healthy and peaceful living in the social setting. Only the excessive desire that leads to egoistic supremacy and indifferent, unconcerned, callous attitude towards others is critically viewed in this context. Buddhistic attitude to *kāma* is ever human at the core and is never inhuman. In this manner it can be seen that the Buddhist reflection on *kāma* is as significant in its early phase as it is in the present time.

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THE IMPACT OF BUDDHISM ON EARLY BENGALI LITERATURE

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The earliest specimens of Bengali language and literature are a collection of poems presumably used as religious songs composed by the Buddhist **Siddhācāryas**. These were discovered by H.P. Shastri from Nepal Durbar Library. P.C. Bagchi discovered a Tibetan translation of these poems in a later period from Nepal. These poems as well as songs are known as **Caryācaryavinīscaya**, as mentioned by H.P. Shastri. The discovery of P.C. Bagchi added greatly to the value and authenticity of the **caryā** songs. The authors of these poems belonged to the famous 'eightyfour Siddhācāryas' of Buddhist Tantric order. They were all scholars and well-versed in both the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures. They were intimately acquainted with the different forms of Buddhist religious practices, such as, **Vajrayāna**, **Sahajayāna** and **Kalacakrayāna**. The poems were composed between eighth and the twelfth century A.C. Another kind of poems was composed by **Sarahapada** and other Buddhist Siddhācāryas known as **Dohā**. These were edited by both P.C. Bagchi and **Rahul Samkṛtyāyana** as **Dohākosa**. These poems belonged to **Sahajayāna** school.

Thus, the early history of Bengali literature began with the religious doctrines and practices of the **Sahajiyā Buddhists**, **Sahajiyā Buddhism** was a particular development of later Buddhism, known as **Tāntric Buddhism**. During the reign of the **Pala** dynasty Buddhism in various **Tāntric** forms gained popularity in Bengal and many **Tāntric** texts and commentaries were written in the Buddhist monasteries that were established in Bengal. The authors of **Sahajiyā Buddhist** songs were mostly inhabitants of Bengal or adjoining areas.

The composers of these poems and the followers of these religious practices rose mostly outside the socially upper class of people and were characterised by a general tendency of protest against current orthodox religious systems. It was practically a religious movement among the masses and responsible for growth of vernacular literature against upper class religious systems with elaborate rites and rituals. Buddhist Sahajiyā cult is not just a branch of major Buddhist philosophy and religion. The real origin of the cult grew up with the tenets of some minor religious sects outside the fold of major religious systems, Buddhism and Hinduism. Buddhist Sahajiyā cult is an esoteric Yogic cult, a combination of Tantric and Yogic practices. The theological speculations and religious practices of contemporary India had the religious undercurrent of esoteric yogic practices. While these were associated with the Buddhistic speculations, these have given rise to the composite religious system of Buddhist Tantricism.

In Buddhist Sahajiyā cult the way of attainment is Sahajayāna. **Sahaja** is conceived as the supreme being. The realisation of **Sahaja** can be attained through intuition and initiation in the secret truth and the practice of Yoga. **Sahaja** means easy or natural. According to this school the formalities of life and ritualistic religious stand in the way of attaining supreme bliss. This distinct religious attitude made the school different from other branches of Tantric Buddhism. They defy all austere practices of discipline, formalities of worship, paraphernalia of rituals and rites, penance, sacrifice, fasting, holy bathing, pilgrimage and such other formalities of religion. They decry all kinds of unnatural strain on human nature and believe that human nature itself is the best way to realise the truth. The total annihilation of sex-element involves an impossible strain on human nature and if it is done, the truth would be far away. According to Sahajayāna it must be transformed and must be led to the state of sublimation. The distinctive nature of Sahajayāna is the revolt against the orthodox system of formal and external religious practices, irrational ties of superstition and beliefs, academic wisdom and different

kinds of meditation. The tradition of Sahajayāna can be found in several folk cults of Bengal.¹

The Buddhist Tantric schools of Vajrayāna, Kalacakrayāna and Sahajayāna are based on the Yogic practices and the system is known as **Hatha-yoga**. It is exclusively the subjective aspect of the religious practices based on certain physical feats. The knowledge of physiology, particularly the nerve-system, their origin, nerve centres, motion of the nerves towards different directions within the body play an important role in **Hatha-yoga**. The physiology is the Yogic-physiology with interpretation peculiar to it.

According to Yogic principle male and female are contained within the human body in the right and the left respectively. These two represent two aspects of the absolute reality by two important nerves. **Idā** and **Pingalā** and the two courses of the vital wind, **Prāṇa** and **Apāna**. The union of the two vital winds through **Suṣumnā** is the vital part of **sādhana** in Yogic practices. The Buddhist Sahajiyā school is fundamentally based on this speculation. The ultimate absolute is the **Sahaja**, the ultimate reality behind the self and the non-self. The principles of dualism and the unfication of the two in a supreme non-dual state is the final attainment of the Buddhist Sahajāyas. This is the principle of union of **Prajñā** and **Upāya**. The ultimate realisation of **Sahaja** is the nature of Supreme Bliss or **Mahāsukha**.²

The carya songs depict this principle of Yogic practices which were very popular over a vast area of easter India and influenced the medicaval literature of Bengal and adjoining areas over several centuries. The great composers of carya songs were Sarahapāda, Śavarapāda, Luipāda, Kanhupāda and others were the Siddhācāryas of Buddhist Sahajiyā cult. Luipada states that our mind (**Citta**) is solely responsible for the creation of the illusory world. Bhusukupāda compares the mind (**Citta**) with a fickle rat which moves during darkness (ignorance). He states that this rat of the vital wind should be controlled to escape rebirth and to attain **Nirvāna**. Bhadepāda says in a carya 'uptil now I was absorved in self-illusion, but now I realise the truth through the instruction of my preceptor and my **Citta** has not fallen down into the

ocean of void." Bhusukupāda says in a song "The great tree of Sahaja is shining in the tree worlds and existence and non-existence are there in Sahaja. Kambatam-barapāda says in a song, 'I have filled my boat of compassion with gold (void or *Śūnyatā*) and have left silver (all false appearances) and steering towards Sahaja. In carya songs, following the Buddhist Tantric texts, the doctrine of *Śūnyatā* is often mentioned.³

The theory of four *śūnyas* was accepted both in the *Dohās* and the *Caryapadas*. In a *Dohā* of Kṛṣṇācārya it has been said that the abode of *Mahasukha* (supreme Bliss) there are four stalks and four leaves, i.e. four gradations of *śūnyatā*. In the *Caryāpadas* and their commentary occasional references are found regarding the doctrine of four *śūnyas* and the impurities of nature (*prakṛti-dosa*) which are the causes of the cycle of birth and death and all the resulting sufferings, and it is prescribed always to eradicate them. In the songs Kānhapada and Dhēndhanapāda it has been elaborated. The emphasis on the element of *Karunā* side by side with the theory of *Śūnyatā* is found in the *caryāpadas*.

The poets of the Sahja school, as evident in both *caryāpādas* and *Dohās*, laid their whole emphasis on their protest against the formalities of life and ceremonial practices of religion. According to this school of thought truth is something which can never be found through truth is something which can never be found through mere austere practices of discipline, neither can it be realised through much reading, philosophising, fasting, sacred bathing, constructing images and worshipping them. Truth can only be attained by intuition within oneself in the most unconventional way through initiation in the *Tattva* (secret truth) and the practice of Yoga. Sarahapāda says in a song "O Yogins, do not take the mirror to see the bracelets in your hands, realise your pure *citta* for yourself (and within yourself)" If the *Sahaja* or the *Bodhicitta* is realised, it is useless to mutter the mantras, have penances, give fire-sacrifices or observing rites and rituals.

The Philosophical speculations, religious attainment, conceptual framework and concept of the ultimate reality, as depicted in the *caryāpādas* and

Dohās, are of general Buddhistic nature, but these literary specimens, as a whole, represent a special school of religious thought with distinctive features of its own. This literary tradition had great impact over later Bengali literature and minor folk religious practices for centuries together.

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IN QUEST OF HUMANITY

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INTRODUCTION :

Humanity is the basic quality of a person. It is considered as the essence of all religions. The term 'humanity' itself denotes the religion of human beings. In that sense we must admit that religion was relevant, is relevant and will be relevant all over the world. An attempt will be made herein to present a general discussion on the complicity of the world today, relevance of religion as revealed in Tharavāda Buddhism with special reference to the Dhammapada.

THE WORLD TODAY :

The modern world is highly developed in every sphere of human knowledge. Science and technology have reached almost their highest peak. Still the number of different types of violence and conflict has increased. Another world-war may not be very far away. Problems of racial discrimination, repression of ethnic and religious minorities and denial of equal rights to women are increasing day by day. In our surrounding some of the issues like communal disharmony, demand for separate states, unequal treatment to female baby, water pollution, child labour, different kinds of corruption and dishonesty are also increasing. Lovelessness, selfishness and attitude of indifference towards others are very common.

Some news-items of India and abroad may be cited here :

"About 20,000 refugees fled the Runings refugee camp in eastern Zaira (Nairobi) yesterday following an overnight attack on their camp." (The Statesman, Calcutta, 15th October, 1996)

"A woman when screaming in pain was locked up in the labour room and left unattended at the Asansol Subdivisional government hospital (West Bengal)." (The Statesman, Calcutta, 27th November, 1997).

"63 people were gunned down at Lakshmanpur Bathe village in Jehanabad district (Bihar) late last night. Among those killed were 16 children and 27 women". (The Statesman, Calcutta, 3rd December, 1997)

"Brooding on sense-desires, ill-will, cruelty and conjuring up like thoughts" stand in contrast to humanity, as mentioned in *Angutara Nikāya*.¹

WHY RELIGION IS RELEVANT :

Religion is an important and outstanding feature of human life. The study of mankind may never be complete without reference to religion. Religion may be crude in origin, it may be associated with superstitions, still its universality can never be denied. "In a sense, as Comte admitted, religion embraces the whole of existence, and the history of religion resumes the entire history of human development." Religion has been defined in terms of moral-values. '*Dharma*', an Indian interpretation of the term 'religion', stands for total behaviour of a person in a refined way and in accordance with moral values. In *Mahābhārata* '*dharma*' has been considered as the highest of the '*trivarga*' or three values, namely, *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. In Buddhism '*dharma*' has been considered as the second of the '*triātana*' or three jewels, namely, *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*. Whether religion or '*dharma*' is given highest priority or not it is most relevant to the present world.

WHY BUDDHISM IS RELEVANT :

It is a fact that weakening of human values in a section has caused some serious social problems. "We live in an age of conflict and war, of hatred and violence, all over the world. Never before has the need been greater for all of us to remember that immortal message which Lord Buddha, the greatest and noblest of the sons of India, gave to us, and to you, and to all the world"—said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This is significant till today. According to Theravada Buddhism, human values arise in the human beings from the very

beginning of the life-process and are manifested due to the accumulated 'karmic force'. These should be developed and exercised.

"Not to do any evil (to cultivate good), to purify one's mind (this is the advice of the Buddhas)". This is the 183rd verse of the Dhammapada.

Human mind is the root cause of all his activities whether good or bad. If a person can remove all the evil thoughts from his mind, he may attain a happy and peaceful life. To attain peaceful life one should be involved in good thoughts and good activities. In this context the Five Precepts or *Pañchasīla* which are called the treasure of virtue may be mentioned in the following words :

- I. Abstinence from destruction of life,
- II. Abstinence from taking what is not given,
- III. Abstinence from committing adultery,
- IV. Abstinence from speaking false, and
- V. Abstinence from drinking intoxicating liquors.

The term *sīla* indicates positive expression against prohibition. The first two of the above-mentioned *sīlas* are consistent with the protection of life and property. The third one indicates the sanctity of family life. The fourth one leads one to truthfulness. And the fifth one signifies self-development.

The way to deal with evil thoughts and actions have been discussed in verse no. 223 of the Dhammapada, in the following words :

"Overcome anger by loving-kindness,

evil by good;

Overcome the stingy by generosity

and liars by truth."

The positive expression of human values have best been understood by the states of Divine Life or *Brahmavihāra*. It proceeds with the meditative

exercise of love or *Mettā*, compassion or *Karunā*, Delightfulness or *Muditā* and Equanimity or *Upekkhā*. With the feeling of love or *Mettābhāvanā* one may extend one's love towards the whole world of living beings. Buddhism does not give any stress on any kind of worship. Instead of that, it gives emphasis on humanity—on human values. Its expressions may be considered as realisation of the impermanency of all phenomena; perseverance in kindness of action, speech and thought towards others; charity; doing for welfare; treating all alike; reverence to parents; being full of learning, modest in heart, strong in energy, active in mind, afraid of wrong doing etc. Wrong deeds once done should be rectified. It may be noted as follows :

"Should a person commit evil,
He should not do it again and again,
He should not find pleasure therein;
Painful is the accumulation of evil."
(Versa no. 117, Dhammapada).

To avoid evil thoughts and evil deeds religion is necessarily relevant. "Pure religion may last long and be perpetuated, in order that it may continue to be for the good and happiness of the great multitudes..."³

CONCLUSION :

Every individual is a part of a large society. Each society has some norms, values, rules etc and expects the individual to behave in a particular manner. Any kind of deviation from that particular manner brings the individual in conflict with the social system and consequently in conflict with himself too. Therefore, the importance of developing individuals as well as society is very great. Buddhism is based on the concept of humanity. The distinct marks of love, friendliness, harmony, non-violence, which are closely associated with the concept of humanity, have been carried in Buddhism. The quest of humanity with the realisation of the relevance of Buddhism in the

present world may be ended with the last message of Lord Buddha: "Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!"⁴

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SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM : A HISTORICAL ENQUIRY

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The study of Buddhism, and for that matter the whole gamut of religious history, in secular historiography goes against the basic assumptions of the Believer by analysing the ecclesiastical ideology in terms of the expression of a specific type of social motivation and value-system. A religious belief is firmly rooted in its social milieu and in its wider manifestations it not only reflects the changing social relations but even mirrors the pains and agonies associated with the process of structural readjustments unleashed by the new social forces. A religious ideology, therefore, needs to be situated in the social setting in order to enable an analyst to address the key issues revolving around it. Buddhism too, with its congenital linkage with the material world, accords centrality to worldly concerns of happiness and sorrow in its precepts and perceptions.

This conceptual stance has been, however, repeatedly challenged by castigating secular historiography as coming to extremely simplistic conclusions by equating erroneously the whole of religious history with "the history of beliefs of which the truth of falsity cannot be vouched."¹ To buttress this cognitive position; G.C. Pande argues, "A common practice among modern historians is to judge religious movements as if they had nothing to do with theological or metaphysical beliefs and to treat them merely as the expression of a type of social motivation and values. It is true that where 'religious' behaviour impinges on universal human values, it can undoubtedly be judged without reference to supposed underlying beliefs.... But there is a wide area where belief needs to be judged as a cognitive claim...."² To condemn Marxist historians' refusal to take cognizance of suprasensible or metaphysical truth as

blasphemy is one thing, but to drub their analytical methodology derived therefrom as fractured or superficial is an obvious negation of a historiographical tradition that seeks to analyse beliefs and practices in terms of social forces, not divine interventions. The emphasis on the historical validity of the cognitive claim tantamounts to the acceptance of all individualistic claims about interaction with god, union with god, transcendence to godhead, etc. This will lead to the construction of a typical post-modernist history wherein history gets fractured into myths, mystic experiences and similar other essentially subjective discourses. The evolution of a religious ideology needs to be viewed as an ideological affirmation of the changing social realities, not as its negation. It is pertinent to note that the world-negating the world-renouncing nature of Buddhism has been stressed upon by G.C. Pande.³ In support of his argument, he contends that the śramana movement, wherein Buddhism enjoyed a status of centrality, was historically both pre-Aryan and non-Aryan in outlook deriving sustenance from the attitude of detachment (nivṛtti). "During the early vedic period when the Aryans were actively engaged in colonisation, it was overshadowed by the activist outlook (pravṛtti) of the Aryans and was looked down upon as something alien. However, once the two cultures fused to form a composite whole and the process of colonisation slowed down, the nivṛtti world outlook started asserting itself, resulting in the basic concepts of the Upaniṣadic Philosophy. In the crisis-ridden Indian society of the sixth century B.C., this world outlook touched a new high and achieved its most rational and organised form in early Buddhism."⁴ This entire epistemological discourse, though aimed at demolishing the view that Buddhism was a product of the changing material culture,⁵ ironically accords centrality to the analysis of distress and pessimism caused by the on-going process of material transformation for the full realisation of the potentiality of Buddhism, both in theory and in practice.⁶ This exercise of divorcing a religion from its social base has led to the denial of the secular or reformist content in the Buddha's message along with an assertion against its equation with an ideology of the newly emergent influential groups of the satthavāhas, the setthis and the gahapatis.⁷ Pande

goes to the extent of suggesting that even its attack on the caste system and the sacrificial rituals did not manifest a social concern because it was basically a product of the śramanic movement. His denial of any social base of Buddhism is both explicit and unequivocal, "...they (Buddhists) sought to transcend, not disrupt, social life. Indeed, having abandoned secular society, they themselves entered a new society based on spiritual relations. They become the spiritual sons of the teachers whom they followed and participated in a spiritual fraternity, believing that man is not fundamentally a material being driven by the instincts of 'production' and 'reproduction'. He is essentially a spiritual creature striving after a goal not attainable in the Kingdom of Man."⁸ This and similar other attempts to delink religion from its contemporary social realities underlines an attempt aimed at monopolising ideological developments by the spiritualists and believers with their transcendent social apathy and a pathological desire for restructuring the social other in tune with the obsolete and largely degenerate value-system. History is thus pushed into the domain of abstruse and historical processes, as they unfold before us, get further mystified with historical understanding undergoing another painful process of myosis. The Marxist historiography in India not only shows its awareness with this historically unacceptable supramundanish frame of reference, but also makes a successful attempt to stop the highjacking of ideas into the domain of the mystique.⁹

A historical survey of Buddhism suggests that right from its inception this ideology has been firmly rooted in the contextual forces of the material world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the formulation seeking to underscore the social roots of the origin of Buddhism, despite occasional theoretical assertions to the contrary,¹⁰ has emerged as a dominant paradigm in current Indian historiography.¹¹ Deriving methodological sustenance from the Marxist notion of the base-superstructure symbiosis, such attempts seek to locate the academic debate in the domain of the changing material make-up of the time of the Buddha. Beginning with the plane of the universal acceptance of the simple intellectual perception positing the social base of an ideational

structure, these studies go on to lay bare the structural linkage between the Buddhist mentalite and the mundane realities of the contemporary world. Denying the construct of the social origins of Buddhism, G.C. Pandey, a leading authority on Indian Buddhism, charges the Marxists both on grounds of empirical misinterpretations and simplistic deductions. To quote, "If the Marxian version of Buddhist principles tends to vulgarize them and treat them as vague expressions of social attitudes and opinions, the Marxist account in the age of the Buddha appears to err on the factual side too.... Much new writing on the subject has apparently escaped Marxist historians altogether, just as the major original writings and deeper principles have been neglected by them."¹² This methodological denouncement and the vague perception of the current Marxist historiography notwithstanding, G.C. Pandey himself haltingly admits a connection between the process of social change and the fact of ideological evolution. "This is not to say that there was no connection whatever between the movement which Buddha started and the conditions of society in which the movement first began. But the connection is an indirect one and while relevant for the purposes of contextual understanding, is not essential as far as validation is concerned."¹³ Even this admission by a vehement critique of the construct of the material origins of Buddhism underlines the indelible connection between Buddhist ideology and the ongoing process of social change, for the issue of validation apart it is contextual underpinnings that have a decisive bearing on the present agenda. The realities of the material world assume a position of unchallengeable centrality in the context of any exercise aimed at explaining the origins of this religion.

The mutual interdependence of Buddhist ideology and the dominant institutions of society emerges as a key issue in the current debate on this theme in Marxist historiography. The connection between Buddhism and the social formation of the age of the Buddha was first highlighted by D.D. Kosambi¹⁴, but it was R.S. Sharma¹⁵ who presented a cogent and persuasive account of this dynamic relationship by emphasising the role of iron in agricultural production which, in turn, made available a sizeable amount of

surplus inaugurating a new set of production relations that ultimately fostered the rise of heterodox sects. This formulation has been, however, challenged on both theoretical and empirical grounds by V.K. Thakur¹⁶ and K.T.S. Sarao.¹⁷ By taking the nature and scope of iron technology as the point of reference, the instrumentality of iron technology in the origins of Buddhism has been denied and an alternate hypothesis of the urbanisation-sponsored ideological developments in the early mid-Ganga valley has been put forward. The debate, if viewed after divorcing it from its polemical content, gains historiographical significance for it strengthens the academic construct of the ideology-material culture nexus of Buddhism by bringing to the fore an impressive body of hitherto unknown and unutilised data pertaining to this topic.

Besides explicating the openness of the Marxist stance on the issue, the debate also underpins the growing realisation about the necessity for exploring the social roots of this ideological development. The early Buddhist historiography admitted of two broad trends¹⁸— the first viewing Buddhism as a mystic, world renouncing - world negating religious movement betraying a total lack of concern for the worldly problems of the people, while the second taking it as a humanistic and ethnically supported religious system with universal appeal decisively confronting the irrationality, sacrificial violence and inequality that characterised the later Vedic formation. Both these trends originated in Germany and articulated yet another facet of the psychological dominance of the colonisers over the Orient; the implication was obvious: the Indians kept their eyes closed to the harsh realities of the material world and took recourse to philosophical speculations at the first available opportunity. Predictably each achievement of the early Indian had a negative explication in these colonial discourses.

To illustrate this point, let us refer to H. Oldenberg, who asserts, "The Indians are wholly strangers to the highest interests and ideals which are the basis of all healthy national life. Will and action are overgrown by thought. But when once the internal balance is disarranged and the natural relationship

between the spirit and the reality of the world is disturbed, thought has no longer the power to take a wholesome grasp of what is wholesome. Whatever is, appears to the Indian worthless compared to the marginal illuminations with which his fancy surrounds it, and the images of his fancy grow in tropical luxuriance, shapeless and distorted, and turn eventually with terrific power against their creator. To him, the true world, hidden by the images of his own dreams, remains an unknown, which he is unable to trust and over which he has no control : Life and happiness in this world break down under the burden of excessively crushing contemplation of the hereafter."¹⁹ Surprisingly even the nationalist historians writing on this theme fell in this trap – they not only emphasised the idealistic and moralistic contents of Buddhism but even their attempts to locate this ideological movement in its milieu were divorced from the realities of the contemporary socio-economic formation.²⁰ The contestations of these stereotypes by A.N. Bose mark the beginning of a historiographical exercise aimed at situating Buddhism in its material context. His attempt to establish a connection between this ideology and the new social groups of *gahapatis* and *setthi*²¹ illustrates this point. It was D.D. Kosambi who, however, made the final departure from the earlier stereotypes by problematising the entire issue and making an enquiry into the social roots of Buddhism. Referring to it as "the most social of religions",²² Kosambi categorised its texts as "a new type of religious literature addressed to the whole of contemporary society, not reserved for a few learned initiates and adepts."²³ Drawing an explicit connection between Buddhism and the newly emergent economic order based on the concept of private property,²⁴ he suggested a syncretic relationship between this ideology and the contemporary social practices and political institutions.²⁵ His arguments were further developed by R.S. Sharma and Romila Thapar with the support of an impressive body of empirical data. For Sharma Buddhism was a direct promotor and regulator of the new agrarian order based on iron technology on the one hand, and the provider of ideological sustenance and rationalisation to the urban norms and value on the other.²⁶ Thapar, while admitting the urban connection of this religion,²⁷ lays emphasis on the changing nature of the

contemporary polity.²⁸ The social basis of Buddhism, despite differences when it comes to the specificities of the constitutive and the regulative factors, remains central to the writings of D.P. Chattopadhyay,²⁹ Ram Bilas Sharma,³⁰ Trevor Ling,³¹ Uma Chakravarti,³² K.T.S. Sarao,³³ V.K. Thakur³⁴ and G.B. Upreti.³⁵ This debate among the historians following the Marxist paradigm has not only underscored the social roots of Buddhism, but has also sharpened the tools of analysis.

The undeniable social roots of Buddhism made it contextually relevant and ingrained in it a dominant strand of thought directly addressed to the contemporary issues of the material world. The ethical underpinning of the doctrine was, no doubt, pronounced but it was moderate in content and located in the realities of the mundane world, a factor that many explain the immediate success of and the impressive reception to this religion. To quote Rhys Davids, "Had the Buddha merely taught philosophy he might have had as small a following as Comte."³⁶ His decisive social appeal stems from the clear stance adopted by him on the problems that afflicted the social system and made the existence of the majority hopeless. The eightfold path becomes extremely relevant in this context. It articulates the normatives of a spiritual culture which, if well cultivated and meaningfully practised, may lead both to the highest spiritual goal and to the highest good attainable here in this present life. This doctrine, which avoids self mortification and goes beyond the dualistic extremes of the way of life traditionally adhered to during the days of the Buddha – ways of exaggerated asceticism and materialistic hedonism, struck at very root of the problem facing the contemporary society. The perceived synchronism between the mental state and the physical actions led the Buddha to advocate a middle course in thinking too, a position which was opposed to such antitheses as Enternalism and Annihilationism.³⁷ While the *Majjhimapatipadā* is an auto-control mechanism against the expansive and contractive tendencies of life on the one hand, it shapes the essential characters of a person in a way to make him socially relevant and personally happy on the other. Thus, despite his preoccupation with the quest for emancipation,

the Buddha was all the time interested in human welfare and, therefore, has postulated a set of doctrines applicable to and profitably for the mundane existence of human beings. As a typical **bheṣakka**, he was a great spiritual healer who promoted mental health and sought to diagnose, prescribe for and cure the mental deformities of the world.³⁸ His realism, rationalism, pragmatism and humanism made him to concentrate on the problems of human existence and to formulate basic ethical principles for their furtherance.

Significantly the Buddha was not interested in metaphysical speculations. He addressed himself to the problems of ethics. This focus of his analytical frame of reference explicates his direct concern for the social realities and the human problems, i.e. instead of wasting time and mental capabilities in tackling obtuse and socially irrelevant issues, the Buddha confined himself to the task of articulating humanistic concerns by concretising ideal social norms, Metaphysics, as pointed out by L. Wittgenstein³⁹ and A.J. Ayer,⁴⁰ is mostly concerned with useless and futile problems. Confucius, in course of translating the same idea into a practical philosophy, goes on to underline the futility of going beyond the laws of nature and morality; for him the transcendental has no practical bearing on man's earthly life. To quote Confucius, "How could we know to serve the supernatural being unless and until we know how to serve mankind?"⁴¹ True to his social concern, the Buddha, as one learns from the corpus of his teachings, neither indulged in nor recommended metaphysical speculations. Rhys Davids points out, "As usual in primitive Buddhism, the ethical corollary is very emphatically insisted upon. ... the speculations are not only useless they are also... wrong; that is, from the Buddhist Point of view, a disadvantage in the struggle towards the only aim worth striving for..."⁴² When questioned by Potthapada for this neglect of metaphysics, the Buddha replied, "This kind of question is not concerned with advantage, not concerned with the Doctrine; it does not even conduce to the elements of good conduct, nor to detachment, nor to real knowledge.. nor to Nibbāna."⁴³ The Buddha's message, which had a direct social appeal, was addressed to an agenda that was real not imaginary or

illusive or hypothetical. In the same vein he underlined the relative profits and advantage of this practice alongwith the precise nature of his own preferential stance. Thus, the Buddha said, "If, Chuṇḍa, the past..., the future... the present means what is true, what is fact, (but) what does not conduce to your profit concerning that the Tathāgata preaches nothing... If Chuṇḍa, the past ..., the future..., the present means what is true, what is fact, and what really conduces to your profit, concerning that the Tathāgat knows well the time when to preach it... what is the reason for this ? It is that the Tathāgata has compassion for the living beings."⁴⁴

Thus, all those who presume that the Buddhist discourses are either exclusively concerned with lofty ideals, high moral, philosophical thought and supra mundane issues, or that it completely ignores the social and economic welfare of the people by shutting off its eyes towards the existing exploitative relations of production, are totally off the mark. This fractured perspective of Buddhism fails to see the essence of the issue at stake - the happiness of human beings for which the Buddha strove. He did perceive, however, that happiness was not possible without leading a moderated life based on accepted moral and spiritual norms. He also realised the limitations of leading such a life by adhering to these norms even in unfavourable material condition. It is true that the Buddha never considered material welfare as an end in itself for it was, for him, only a means to a higher and nobler end, but he did posit the indispensability of this means in achieving a higher purpose for happiness. It is in consonance with the general tenor of Buddhistic teachings, therefore, that the Buddha admitted of the need of a set of minimal ethical norms based on societal conditions favourable to spiritual success even for that of a monk engaged in meditation at a secluded place.⁴⁵ The ideological formulation of the Buddha obviously did not exclude life from its contextual social and economic mornings. He perceived human life in its totality, a point that emerges with penchant clarity from numerous of his discourses. Walpola Rahula cites a couple of examples to illustrate this feature of the teaching, "The Cakkavattisihanādasūṭta of the Dīgha-nikāya (No.

26) clearly states that poverty (*daliddiya*) is the cause of immorality and crimes such as theft, falsehood, violence, hatred, cruelty, etc. Kings in ancient times, like government today, tried to suppress crime through punishment. The *Kūṭadanta-sūṭta* of the same *Nikāya* explains how futile this is. It says that this method can never be successful. Instead the Buddha suggests that, in order to eradicate crime, the economic condition of the people should be improved : grain and other facilities for agriculture should be provided for farmers and cultivators; capital should be provided for traders and those engaged in business; adequate wages should be paid to those who are employed. When people are thus provided for opportunities for earning a sufficient income, they will be contented, will have no fear or anxiety, and consequently the country will be peaceful and free from crime."⁴⁶ Similar instances of the Buddha's concern for the economic well-being of the people can be multiplied alongwith his stand against the structured social order.

The Buddha's attitude towards caste system is a poignant articulation of his deep concern for human values. Swami vivekananda, who was the first Indian to recognise the "social element" of Buddhism as its "unique element", persuasively argued, "The Buddha was the first to teach universal brotherhood of man", he was "the only great Indian philosopher who would not recognize caste." "He was the great preacher of equality of man."⁴⁷ The second Indian to recognise this aspect of the Buddha's teachings was P.L. Narasu, whose writing decisively influenced B.R. Ambedkar. For Narasu "... the spirit of Buddhism is essentially socialistic".⁴⁸ Almost in a similar tone Angarika Dharmapala of Sri Lanka declared in 1913, "A progressive evolution with a definite ideal, its realization here and now, making life cheerful, energetic, serene, worth living for the sake of doing good for the welfare of others, this Tathagata proclaimed."⁴⁹ For the Buddha, the belief of the superiority on one caste over the other was not only false but evil (*pāpakam ditthigatam*).⁵⁰ For him all the four castes are equally pure and there is no difference among them.⁵¹ Buddhism views caste system as a result of social prejudice and socio-economic deformities and admits the reality of a universal two-fold class

division – the masters (**ayyo**) and the slaves (**dāsa**). The proclamation of the Buddha that the caste and class prejudice were constraints to higher morality and knowledge and, therefore, to salvation indeed signified a revolution in social thought.⁵²

Thus, firmly rooted in the contemporary material milieu Buddhism never divorced itself from the realities of the material world. It illustrates a continuous pattern of response to the social issues, for this was the unavoidable starting point of all ethical formulations. It were the immediate concerns of the contemporary world that not only motivated the Buddha to act but also provided a direction to his ethical constructions. In fact, the Buddha's attitude towards the material world is a perfect example of the pattern of interaction between the material base and the ideological structure, a pattern, if viewed in the broader context of the history of Buddhism, that seeks to lend credence to Gramsci's delineation of a cyclic relationship between the base and the superstructure.

Thus Buddhism is a religion of the common man, the modern 'proletariat'. It is a religion without elaborate ritualism and without even priests in the conventional sense.⁵³ The devotees spread knowledge of **Nirvāṇa** to all irrespective of caste and social status. In the real sense, Buddhism is probably the only humanitarian and universal religion which was propagated without fighting bloody wars. Its one of the most distinguished features is, as Prof. A. Toynbee points out, "a code of altruistic ethics which teaches that every one must do good in the in the interest of the whole world and make over to others any merit he may acquire by his virtues"⁵⁴. This spirit of self-sacrifice for the welfare of fellow human beings is in itself sufficient to keep Buddhism relevant not only for today but for ages to come.

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SOME ASPECTS OF BUDDHISM AND HINDUISM : A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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The aim of every religion is to lead man to a higher life. Anything that does not conduce to this ultimate goal cannot be regarded as the essence of that religion. There are, however, various customs, usages and even rites and rituals, which are associated with every religion because of ethnic, historical, sociological and various other factors. But they cannot be regarded as the essence of that religion. Hinduism is, in many respects, a unique phenomenon in the history of religions. Indeed, Hinduism can hardly be called a religion in the popularly understood sense of the term. In fact, Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it, says Gandhiji "there is room for the worship of all the prophets of the world". Hinduism asks everyone to worship God according to his own faith of Dharma. It does not prescribe one set of dogmas or formulas for spiritual elevation but offers a code of universal principles with manifold deductions arrived at from different standpoints. It is like a huge banyan tree, with thousands of branches and twigs, so that even followers have to be reminded that any one of the twigs or branches is not the tree. Hinduism believes that truth is universal and the quest for truth is eternal; it can be reached in diverse ways and through diverse experiments. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that each school of thought on the spiritual plane leads to God : "as many views, so many are the paths."

The Eternal Religion of the Hindus :

The word "Hindu", it must be noted, is of a foreign origin. Actually, most of what is usually understood by the term "Hinduism" had been in existence since very much long before that term came into vogue. In fact, the term coined by occidental scholars devoted to cult of nomenclature, is meaningless to the Hindu. Religion to the Hindus is not an ism, not a bundle

of creeds, beliefs, rituals and formulae. Religion is the whole of life – it is a way of life. Hence, the Hindus call their religion Sanatana Dharma, "the Eternal Religion." Dharma is that which holds together or upholds the integrity of the individual, of society, of the cosmos. Every pursuit of truth, whether in the field of science or literature, whether in the realm of social service or artistic activity, whether in isolation and meditation or in social relationship and functions, is a fulfilment of Dharma, an expression of religious living. Such is the definition of the Sanatana Dharma of the Hindus.

Religion, to a Hindu, does not mean a cult, but the ways and means for the realisation of God or the identification of oneself with the Creator Himself. Hinduism is not only vast, it is ancient, being the oldest living religion in the world, which has earned for itself the epithet 'Sanatana' or eternal. It had no beginning, nor shall it have an end. It is an encyclopaedia of universal principles. It has got a unique elasticity and catholicity to mould its application to changing circumstances without changing its core.

Cardinal Belief in Hinduism :

Broadly speaking, Hinduism is a theistic religion. The Hindus of the Vedic, Upanishadic, Puranic and other important periods of the history of Indian religions, all believed in God, the highest self. They also believed in human beings having individual souls (Jivātmans) which, in their very nature, are identical with the highest Self, God or Brahman. In regard to the particular forms of creeds or cults, like Vaisnavism, Saivism, Saktism, which the different followers of Hinduism embrace, the central object of the act of the worship, thought and meditation is the attainment and realisation of the same ultimate Reality, supreme Brahman.

The Hindus also hold that the individual souls (embodied as they are) suffer all kinds of miseries and privations, and they are subject to birth, decay, disease, decrepitude, death and rebirth in consequence of deeds, good or bad, done by them in this life or in the previous ones. They also fervently believe that they can, by their own efforts in the form of acquiring Jñāna (knowledge)

or doing Karma (work or action), or practising bhakti (devotion), or yoga (the practice of contemplation and meditation), hope for release from worldly bondage, by having realised their own unity with the Universal Self.

It may be noted in passing that without knowledge, to some extent, of the Vedic lore, which certainly includes that of Upanishadic doctrines, it is not at all possible to understand properly the doctrine of the Buddha, whom great Swami Vivekananda called 'a rebel child of Hinduism'.

Buddha's rebel against Hinduism :

Buddha was a dynamic personality. He was universal love, kindness and perfect wisdom personified. He always appealed to reason (yukti) with analysing human ventures in search of the ultimate. Truth or Reality, without any bias towards particular views, as if he always said, 'O ye Bhiksus, you must accept my view after a fully critical examination and not out of deference to me as your Master'. He was a great rationalist in philosophical thoughts and onceptions, a great master of moral force, a great renouncer; and a supreme physician for healing human diseases, passions and torments.

The chief religious and philosophical system that prevailed in pre-Buddhistic age was that of the Upanishads. We find in it more emphasis being laid on Jñāna (knowledge) than on Karma (action or work). But even in the Buddha's own time the influence of priesthood and vedic ritualistic institutions, such as yajnās (sacrifices), did not fully cease to work on people's minds, though the first impact on it inflicted by the Upanishadic spiritual teaching had commenced to be felt somewhat earlier.

The revolt against Karma, however came to have a powerful influence on men's mind when Buddha preached his first sermon (dharma-cakra-pravartana) at Sarnath, after his attainment of perfect enlightenment or knowledge (Sambodhi) in his thirty first year, at Bodh-Gaya. In this hostility against the Brahmanic Cult of ritualistic Karma (Vedic sacrifices and other ceremonies), Jaina and other schools of philosophy and religion, which were current in the Buddha's time, also joined their hands to some extent.

Disagreement between Buddhism and Hinduism :

Much stress is not given in Buddhism on the Hindu Varna and āsrama duties ordained for the different castes. The Hindus gave the right of priesthood and leadership in religion to the Brahmanas alone, but to be a believer in Buddhism, one need not be a Brahmana, or a rich person. In the matter of religious observances and performances, there could be no distinction between a Brahmana and non-Brahmana, between high and low, or rich and poor.

Buddha adopted from the Upanishads the conclusion that the world was full of miseries and that, accordingly, the aim of human life should be to find out a way of escape from the miseries. But Buddha exaggerated the aspect of worldly suffering. In Buddhism there was no God to draw a silver lining to the darkest clouds of human suffering. The truth, according to the Upanishads, is that though sufferings prevail, there is also a potential source of joy in this earth. That joy comes from a realisation that God, the supreme reservoir of all joy and perpetual bliss, is with us dwelling in the Earth of His creation. While the path to deliverance, according to Buddhism is a rigorous abstraction— according to Hinduism, it is sweet.

Hinduism does not merely advocate universal brotherhood and cosmopolitanism but explains the spiritual basis of such conduct and raises it to the highest level of spiritual attainment, beyond the point reached by other religions. Love for others is not a mere creed or moral code for a Hindu, but is the goal of his spiritual career. The person who has got rid of his Ego and personal existence and merged with the Divine after himself acquiring divinity or sublimity, cannot be involved in another birth. He can proclaim 'I am that Brahman'. Herein lies the basic difference between the Hindu and the Buddhist ideals. According to Buddhism, one has to pass, broadly, through the same or similar stages namely, purity of moral character and conduct (sila), elimination of Ego, right speech, right view, right resolve and right action, in order to escape from the world of suffering, concentration (Samadhi) and meditation (dhyana), leading to a mastery of the mind and the senses. But the parting of the way starts from here. According to Buddhism, neither.

Samadhi nor dhyana has any concern for divinity. The objects of these process is to attain an abstract condition of placidity and bliss, called Nirvana. The ultimate goal is, of course, freedom from rebirth and misery. But while Hindu concept of moksha aims at tearing off the chains of rebirth and suffering by identifying oneself with the Creator Himself who alone stands for perfection, Buddhism finds the path of escape through the attainment of purity which means the annihilation of passion, hatred, attachment and desire, ignorance and delusion. When all these aberrations disappear, resultant is a state of immutable and undecaying bliss, called Nirvana. Hinduism is also aims at reaching such a state, but questions the practicability of attaining such an abstraction without fixing one's eyes on the Supreme Being. According to Hinduism, so long as the process of identification with the Supreme Being is not complete, no amount of purity of conduct, knowledge or mental exercise will suffice to reach the desideration of freedom from bondage. Even after a person has undergone all the exercise for deifying himself and visualised God in a state of trance (Samadhi) he may not have a permanent contact with God immediately. For that is necessary Divine Grace. It is left to the Creator to decide to whom He will reveal Himself and when.

In spite of mutual controversy, conflict and opposition between Hinduism and Buddhism and their reaction on each other in the different periods of Indian history, the two may intrinsically be treated as identical.

Affinity between hinduism and Buddhism :

There appears to be good agreement between Hinduism and Buddhism in so far as the attempt to bring about an extinction of all mental desires and cravings are concerned. In order to free himself from the assaults of desire, decrepitude, death and all adversity in life, Gautama, the Bodhisattva, renounced the world in search of that agency or way by which these sufferings might be put an end to, and for the attainment of eternal bliss (nirvana) by means of meditation and contemplation (Samadhi), which is only possible to be attained in lonely forest. He resolved to extinguish three fires, Kāmāgni (fire of attachment), dvesāgni (fire of hatred and mohāgni (fire of delusion or

ignorance), and make himself worthy (arhat) of realising and enjoying the bliss of emancipation. In this matter, the Buddha accepted the Upanishadic view that, unless one can dispense with all human desires (Kama) or hankerings and cravings, which even latently work within the mind, one cannot expect to attain the highest stage of immortality.

Buddhism borrowed many an idea and theory from the Samikshya and also from the practical yoga philosophy of the Hindus. The Buddhists, like the followers of the other Indian Brahmanic systems of philosophy, believed in the doctrine of suffering or pain (dukhāvāda). They also had firm faith in the doctrine of work or action (Karmavāda), according to which human beings bear the consequences of their good or evil acts in life, and their future existence is shaped accordingly.

They also cherished a firm belief in the doctrine of rebirth (Janmāntaravāda). The ego, pudgala or sattva as the Buddhists call it, that is, the individual being called as Jīva by the Hindus, is always subject to pleasure or pain as the result of good or evil deeds by him. Human beings, however, always strive to attain the state of unmixed happiness and tranquillity, being released from the hard fetters of birth, disease, death and rebirth (Samsara).

Conclusion :

Unqualified toleration of other religions is the essence of Hinduism. One of the striking features of the Buddhist faith is that it has been widely accepted and cherished by people of different countries and races beyond its own Indian homeland. We have in Buddhism, a tradition of religious faith and practice widely accepted by different peoples at different times. In this sense Buddhism may be described as a 'Universal religion'. Both Hinduism and Buddhism have the attributes of universal tolerance, universal brotherhood and service to mankind. It is a unique feature of the Indian people that, though they belong to different religious sects and follow different systems of philosophy, they generally cherish a spirit of toleration towards their opponents and heretics. The relation between followers of Hinduism and Bud-

dhism had generally been cordial. The truth seems to be that the community, as a whole, recognised the fact that essentially there was uniformity underlying the fundamental principles of religion.

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"RELEVANCE OF THE SUTTANIPĀTA TO MODERN TIMES FOR SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS RESURRECTION"

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The **Suttanipāta** is a valuable source for studying Buddhism and Buddhist society in Bihar. It contains important information about socio-economic and religious condition of this area during the life and time of Lord Buddha who had to encounter very difficult social and religious situation afflicted with priestocratic dominance on religious and spiritual aspirations, caste violence and bickerings, personal, gods shrouded with mysterious rituals. Under these circumstances Lord Buddha exerted hard with his deep study and wide experiences of difficult sādhanas which enabled him to be the Middle-Path-Finder for the first time in history of the mankind. His Dharma developed gradually as a world religion with revolutionary impact on society from Śrī Lanka, India, Nepal across Tibet to Central Asia, upto China, Japan and host of other countries in the east and the west. Everybody who came into contact with knowledge and experiences bequeathed by Lord Buddha condemned the caste, creed and communal violence and bickerings of this region. caste system rigorously sequegated the "excrement" of society and was observed in a positive fashion.¹ The scholars later called this caste-based scripture of Manu to have been guided by the holy lies and the social system which it advocated had been a priestly system of deception and suppression.² Exactly this was the situation of ancient Bihar where the Tathāgata struggled for study and experience and inspired the mankind to study and experience for struggling against the social evils what we are all facing even today throughout the world in one from or the other. So the study of the **Suttanipāta** in the light of the above mentioned resolutions is relevant today.

Historicity of the **Suttanipāta** is beyond controversy. Contents of this text and image of Buddhism found in it have been appreciated on a global scale. F. Nietzsche (1844-1900) had said that Buddhism was making silent progress throughout Europe and might become capable of replacing an exhausted "Opiate" Christianity and European Buddhism may prove indispensable.³ Further it was observed that Buddhism was hundred times more realistic than Christianity- it possesses a heritage of posing problems objectively without emotion, it follows a Philosophical movement that had endured for hundreds of years.⁴ Beyond all religious creeds, Europe is now being challenged by a trend toward spirituality that could unify all of humanity. There is a need for an anthropological spirituality that could overcome centuries - old elitist categories and isolation from history and society thus being able to connect the universe, god, and humankind in a harmonious linkage.⁵

So far as the Socio-religions and material conditions of Bihar are concerned, it throws light on the refutation of the caste system, duties of true Brāhmaṇas, futility of sacrificial performances, useless discussion about Ātmā (Soul), spread of religions cults, significance of the life of penance (Tāpasa way of life), conduct of regulated life, about conversations with different experts on religion and spirituality. **Suttanipāta** helps us to know some significant points connected with ecological and environmental problems of the Gangetic plain over, which the great Maurya Emperor Aśoka concentrated his mind and gave desired protection in order to maintain a balance in nature. This is worthy of reliance corroborating them with the help of the literary and archaeological evidences.

The Maurya Emperor Aśoka (269-232 B.C.) took keen interest in the Tripitaka literature in course of installing his famous Bhabru Rock Edict⁶ and he paid a special attention to the **Suttanipāta** in mentioning or prescribing seven eminent Buddhist texts for the use to the lovers of Buddhism.⁷ Among the seven Buddhist texts of the Asokan inscription as many as four texts **Vinayasamukase**, **Mumigāthā**, **Moneysuta** and **Upatisapāsine** are respectively mentioned in **Uragavagga**, **Mahāvagga** and **Atthakavagga**.⁸ This

indicates the historicity and importance of the **Suttanipāṭa**. Its language is identical to the Vedic language (Chhandasa) and in many ways the thought and content of this work were borrowed by the some later **Upanishads**. Some scholars are of the view that the **Suttanipāṭa** is the first compilation of the **Tripitaka** literature.⁹

During the period under review ancient Bihari society was badly under the grip of caste bickerings. Lord Buddha was averse to this declining situation. He refuted the **Varṇa** system which was the main source of caste bickerings in Bihar. The **Parābhāvasutta** and the **Vasalasutta** of **Vragavagga**, **Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta** of **Chulavagga**, the **Pabbajjāsutta**, the **Sundarikabhāradvājasutta**, the **Selasutta**, the **Vaseṭhasutta** of **Mahāvagga** are relevant to focus over present deterioration of the social condition of Bihar on account of **Varṇa** and **Jāti** bickerings.¹¹ Lord Buddha boldly condemned the feeling of caste and Gotra and remarked that the main cause of decline of an individual is his pride for feeling of caste, Gotra and amount of wealth hoarded by him and he falls down because of disrespect paid to his own kith and kin on the basis of his caste feeling. He puts his view that man becomes of low origin by dint of his nature of work and not by dint of his caste. In pre-Christian era this land of Buddha and Mahāvīra was badly in the grip of caste tension so much so that the Lord Buddha was consistently vigilant in condemning the concepts of **Varṇa** and caste. While lord Buddha was moving in the Magadhan capital **Rājagṛiha**, the Emperor **Bimbisāra** sent his royal messenger after lord Buddha to inquire about his caste. Then the Buddha had already proceeded to the **Pāṇḍava** hills where he sat in a cave. Soon **Bimbisāra** rushed to that place and offered wealth and elephantry. But the Buddha declined to accept the offer and replied to **Bimbisāra** that he hailed from the Gotra of Solar dynasty and **Śākya** caste of **Kośala** Janapada in the Himalayan territory, but he did not care for all these antecedents, because he had discarded worldly pleasures for the sake of self-complacent penance.¹² An interesting discourse on caste is found in the **Sundarikabhāradvājasutta** of the **Mahāvagga** where lord Buddha exhorted not to ask the caste identity but

conduct. As fire comes out of wood so inspite of having been of low Kula, a man becomes perfect, pure, saintly, aloof of shameful work. In *Selasutta*, one Keniya Jaṭila hosted lord Buddha with three hundred monks whom he gave meal. Here also Jaṭila utters to his affiliation with the caste brotherhood of the Buddha. The most important piece is the *Vaseṭhasutta* through which the Buddha refuted the caste Varṇa system in strong worded statements. Controversy of Casteism has been discussed elaborately through scientific illustrations in this Sutta. Many persons came across the lord Buddha and every body questioned and wanted to know his caste Gotra and family status or origin. All these points prove that Bihar had become the cradle of casteism in daily life of the people. Status of man was determined on the basis of his caste and in this connection even lord Buddha was not spared, although the Buddha took everybody to his task and all surrendered before his convincing arguments. The *Suttanipāṭa* states that the Brāhmaṇas had ceased to observed their prescribed Dharma and became greedy on account of which violence increased, because they started sacrificial performances through killing cows. Mass scale massacre of cows led to the spread of diseases, otherwise formerly there were only three diseases : desire, hunger and old age. The well planned composite society based on the Varṇa system badly disintegrated and seeds of differences were sown by the Brāhmaṇas among the Kshatriyas, the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. The Kshatriyas also were divided into many subcastes and the women started giving disrespect to their husbands. Four constituent classes of the Varṇa were broken into many sub-castes and all became slave to sex and luxury. The priests used to kill the cows at the cost of their Dharma. The milk-giving cows were killed by the king in thousands of number. The evil Brāhmaṇas saw royal wealth, well-dressed and well-ornamented beautiful ladies, well-decorated chariots driven by glant horses. They saw palatial houses of the kings. In this way the Brāhmaṇas became very much greedy of cattle wealth, beautiful ladies and vast hoard of wealth. They rushed to the Ikshvāku kings and put pressure on them for performing sacrificial rituals such as Vājapeya (ritual of drinking wine),

Aśvamedha, Purushamedha, Nirargala (Sarvamedha). Hindu social organisation became caste ridden and several sub-castes appeared.¹⁴

In fact the Magadhan Empire in its initial stage of humble extent covering the present area of Bihar was highly developed and was prosperous for its onward imperial expansion. The **Dhaniyasutta** of the **Uragavagga** of the **Suttanipāta** refers to a Brāhmaṇa from Magadha who tilled land with a ploughshare made of iron, after day's work it had become hot and was quickly dipped in water.¹⁵ Pāṇini also mentions about the production of iron ploughshares.¹⁶ The use of iron ploughshares in the agricultural life of ancient Bihar led to the growth of big landlords. Connected with this growth was also vast wealth of livestock-breeding as an asset to agrarian advancement of Magadha or ancient Bihar. Oxen of huge size were used for many kinds of field work, as a means of transport through bullock cart, carrying backload as horses, for transporting troops and thus cattle wealth was very useful.¹⁷ It is because of this utility of cattle wealth that the **Brāhmaṇadhammikasutta** of the **Chullavagga** of the **Suttanipāta** extols cattle wealth as bringing foodgrain, physical strength, beauty and happiness.¹⁹

This idea of cattle wealth protection has been supported also by **Kātyāyana**.¹⁹ It was the influence of this idea that the Maurya Emperor Aśoka took very strong view of non-violence and prohibited slaughtering of animals as indicated in the long list mentioned in the pillar Edict V.²⁰ In the agrarian society of ancient Bihar of Magadha **Kasibhāradvāja** was the biggest landlord of the time of the lord Buddha.²¹ He boasted of possessing as many as five hundred (500) ploughshares engaged in brisk cultivation. This sutta refers to technical terms for different parts of ploughshares such as **Juṭṭhā**, **Hala**, **Phār** or **Phala**, **Chhekonī**, **Harīsha** (handle of the ploughshare), **Nadhanā** (Nostril rope) and so on. The **Dhammikasutta** of the **Chūlavagga** in its commentary by **Buddhaghosha** refers to as many as thirty thousand cattle head including twenty seven thousand cows possessed by the Upāsaka named **Dharmika**. There were large number slaves and other kinds of labourers who worked in the farm.²²

Religious Perspective :

Magadhan Empire (ancient Bihar) was the centre of the Parivrajakas who were wandering and preaching among the common people against vedic priestly ideas. There were śramaṇas representatives of non-orthodox religious schools criticising (caste) Varṇa system and the Brahmanical way of life. This background amply illustrates the anguish and tormented feelings of the people suffering from socio-economic injustice. Today (everybody can feel it). The Śramaṇas rejected the vedic authority and denounced the ideological and socio-religious norms of the priestly society. Their ideals were based on logic, experience and ethical norms. They tackled the issues of man's role and place in nature and society from their own experienced angle of views. Lord Buddha was the foremost spiritual hero who guided and discussed the issues of life, nature, salvation etc. He gave sound arguments and finally he successfully proved the legitimate ideas visualised against priestly culture. The *vasethasutta* of the *Mahāvagga* of the *Suttanipāṭa* concerning refutation of the (caste) varṇa system was an extraordinary feat of the lord Buddha.²³

However, lord Buddha did not attack on some material interests of the ruling class so long as the conscription for recruitment of youngmen, systems of usury, slavery and bonded labour are concerned, because he had some larger social and religious interests to go ahead. He advanced new religious and social programme through his famous doctrine of Triratna, because daily life in Sangha, rules of conduct enshrined in the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* were of vital importance. It created a progressive social platform for responding to challenges of the Brahmanical religion and society. Series of conversions from Brahmanism to Buddhism were the unique phenomena Kings, Emperors, rulers, bureaucrats, academicians, professionals of several crafts, philosophers etc., were enamoured to accept the argument of lord Buddha to whose feet they bowed down their head and heart. The whole *Gāthās* and *Suttas* are testimonies to this fact.²⁴

However, in one way, the ideological foundation of lord Buddha, particularly his steps towards alienation from the Brahmanical society made

him an ally to his contemporary ruling class. With reference to the landed interests and expansionist policy of Ajātasatru at the cost of republics his reticence or dispassion in regard to the political struggle of the republican states against tribal fragmentation supported by the Brahmanical ideology of state and government is a mystey. In fact, the process of centralisation in political life of Magadha had a tendency to synchronise with the spiritual unity out of some heetical schools of the time. The **Sabhiyasutta** of the **Mahāvagga** of the **Suttanipāta** throws light over these points. This sutta refers to a long list of philosophers full of wanderlust including Pūrṇa Kāśyapa, Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Keśakambali, Prakudha Kātyāyana, Sanjaya Belatṭhiputra and Nirgrantha Jñātriputra.²⁵ Ultimately lord Buddha and Buddhism remained active in the field and this spiritual unity wynchronising with imperial political consolidation led to wonderful religious and ideological alloy for an apparent link between the Upanishadic thought and Buddhistic teaching which advanced and bolstered the cause of Magadhan history and institutions. A thorough reading of the **Suttanipāta** proves its relevance to an understanding of social and religious perspective of Bihar today.

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2. **Ibid.**, p. 126.
3. **Ibid.**, p. 127; Max Weber, **The Religion of India**, A Free press paperback, Macmillan, London, pp. 235-243.
4. **Ibid.**
5. Mariangela Fala, "Religions Trends Among European Youth" **Dharma world** (For Living Buddhism and interfaith Dialogue), Sept./Oct.,

1997, Vol. 24, Edited by Kazumasa Osaka, Kosei Publishing company, Tokyo, pp. 16-18. (The auother's view has been editorially susbtantiated, "Beyond all religions creeds, Europe is not being challenged by a trend toward a spirituality that unify all humanity."). However, the author has made an interesting observation. "Western culture has taken meditation techniques originating in the Eastern tradition and used them for different purposes... And we must not forget the attention that the west can have for some so-called Eastern masters or garus, who are drawn by the possibilities offered by the West - what the famous Tibetan master Chogyam Trungpa calls" The supermarket of spirituality."

6. Yogendra Mishra, *Aśoka* (Hindi), Patna, 2nd edition, 1993, pp. 97-98; Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and The Decline of the Mauryas*, London, 1963, pp. 180, 229, 261; G.M. Bongard-Levin, *Mauryan India*, New Delhi; 1985, p. 34. Bhabru R.E. refers to seven Buddhist texts for repeatedly being heard and followed by the nuns and monks. Aśoka addresses the monks, Upāsakas and Upāsikas with special emphasis. This edict also refers to the Triratna (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) and Saddharma which is said to have been immortal heritage for the Buddhists.
7. Seven Buddhist texts are : 1. *Vinayasamukase*, 2. *Ariyavansasutta*, 3. *Anāgatabhayani*, 4. *Munigāthā*, 5. *Moneyasute*, 6. *Upatisapasine*, and 7. *Rāhulovādasutta*. Among these seven texts second and third ones form the part of the *Anguttaranikāya* and the seventh one forms the part of the *Majjhimanikāya*, and the remaining rour texts form the part of the significant work, the *Suttanipāta* which was popular in the Buddhist society of Bihar.
8. *Vinayasamukase* and *Upatisapasine* occur in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as *Tuvatakasutta* (4.14) and *Sāriputtasutta* (4.16). *Munigāthā* occurs in *Uragavagga* as *Munisutta* (1.12) and *Moneyasutta* occurs in the *Mahāvagga* as *Nālakasutta* (3.11).

9. P.V. Bapat mentions that the **Suttanipāṭa** occupies the first position in the collection of the **Gāthās** of the **Tripiṭaka**. "India and Buddhism", 2500 years of Buddhism, New Delhi, Publications Divisions, 1964 in this connection the **Dhammapada**, **Khuddakapāṭha** **Itivuttaka**, **Theragāthā** and **Therīgāthā** are little later than the **Suttanipāṭa**. Many **Gāthās** of the **Suttanipāṭa** have been incorporated by the Sanskrit Buddhist literature of Mahāyāna Buddhism such as the **Mahāvastu**, **Lalitavistara** etc. The famous work **Milindapanho** of first century A.D. refers to the title of the **Suttanipāṭa** and its **Gāthās**. All the five chapters of the **Suttanipāṭa** contain seventy two Suttas.
10. **Aṭṭhakavagga** and **Parāyaṇavagga** are collections of the unique philosophical poetry and are considered to be unsurpassed in the world literature. They had become popular in the pre-Christian era of the Gangetic valley. Later they formed the source of the doctrine of void which developed in the Mahāyāna Buddhism and were relished so much so that their copies were procured by the Buddhist monk scholars of Tibet, China and Mongolia where their translations are preserved with reverence. It is said that **Aṭṭhakavagga** was most dear to Lord Buddha. Once the Buddhist elder Sonakutikanna of Kuraraghara (Avanti) visited lord Buddha at Śrāvastī where he stayed at night in the Gandha kūṭī. Early in the morning Sonakutikanna pleased lord Buddha through his recitation of **Aṭṭhakavagga**. Lord Buddha blessed him.
11. "जातित्यद्धो धनत्यद्धो, गोतत्यद्धो च यो नरो ।
सज्जाति अतिमज्जेतितं, तं परामवतो मुखं ॥४॥
(a) "*Jātiṭṭhaddho dhanatṭhaddho, gotatṭhaddho ca yo naro,
Sañjānti atimaññetitam, taṃ prabhāvato mukhaṃ. 4.*"
Uragavagga; 6, 14; It enumerates twelve causes for the decline of an individual.

“न जच्चा वसलो होति, न जच्चा होति ब्राह्मणो
कम्मुना वसलो होति, कम्मुना होति ब्राह्मणो ॥2॥

(b) “*Na jccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hōti brahmano,*
Kammunā vasalo hoti, kammunā hoti brāhmaṇo.21”

Uragavagga; 7, 21; It determines the characteristics of low man and of Brāhmaṇa.

Sundarikabhāradvāja Sutta of Mahāvagga; 4, 8; describe the futility of caste in acquiring human qualities. नीचा कुलीनोपि मुनी धितीमा, आजानीयो होति हिरीनिसेधो ॥8॥ “*Nicā Kulinopi muni dhitimā. ājāṇīyo hoti hirinisedho*”. 8.

“न जच्चा ब्राह्मणो होति, न जच्चा होति अब्राह्मणो ।
कम्पना ब्राह्मणो होति, कम्पना होति अब्राह्मणो ॥57॥

(c) “*Na jaccā brāhmaṇo hoti, na jcca hoti abrāhmaṇo,*
Kammanā brāhmaṇo hoti, Kammanā hoti aprāhmaṇo.” 57.

Mahavagga; 9,57; It indicates that caste does not determine the characteristics of a Brāhmaṇa. Nature of work determines it.

12. **Pabbajāsutta of Mahāvagga, 1, 19.**

13. **Sundarikabhāradvāja Sutta; 4, 8.** That time the lord Buddha was staying on the bank of the river Sundarī in the Kosala Janapada. Sundarī river has been identified as the river Sāi. The lord Buddha was sitting beneath the shadow of a tree. Sundarikabhāradvāja was a Brāhmaṇa. He started discourse with lord Buddha with question of caste; Āchārya Narendradeva, **Bauddha dharma Darśana** (Hindi), Bihar Hindi Rashtrabhasa Parishad, Patna, 1956, pp. 14-15.

14. **The Brāhmaṇadhammika Sutta of the Chulavagga** deals in detail with the caste polluted social system of the Varṇa on account of declining Brahmanical society. This sutta contains thirty two well-

composed verses replete with vivid picture of decaying social condition.

“खत्तिया ब्रह्मबन्धू च, ये चञ्जे गोत्तरक्खिता ।
जातिवाद निरङ्कत्वा, कामानं वसगामुन्ति ॥32॥”

“*Khattiyā brahmabandhū ca, ye caññe gottarakkhitā,
Jativāda nirankattvā, Kāmānani Vasagāmunti.*” 32.

The Kshatriyas, the Brahmanas and others were well-protected with the Gotras became fragmented and badly disintegrated and finally became slave to sex and luxury.

15. **Dhaniyasutta of the Uragavagga**, “सेय्यथापि नाम फाले दिवससन्ततो उदके पक्खितो चिच्चिटायति चिटिचिटायति सन्धूपायति सम्पधूपायति, ... ।” “*Seyyathapi nāma phālo divasasantatto udake pakkhito cieciṭāyati ciṭiṭāyati sampadhūpāyati,...*”
16. **V.S. Agrawala, India as known to Pāṇini, Varanasi, pp. 51-55.**
17. **Ibid, pp. 52-53.**
18. **Brāhmaṇadhammika Sutta of the Chulavagga :**
“अन्नदा बलदा चेता, वण्णदा सुखदा तथा ।
एतमत्थवसं अत्वा, नास्सु गावो हनिंसु ते ॥14॥”
“*Annadā baladā ceti, vaṇṇadā sukhadā tathā,
Etamatthavasam atvā, nassu gavo haninsu te.*” 14.
19. **Thomas Burrow, "Chanakya and Kautilya", Annals of the Bhandarkar oriental Research Institute, Pune, 1968, Vols. 47-49.**
20. **Yogendra Mishra, Op.cit., pp. 125-126, P.E.V. was issued in the 26th reign year of the Emperor Asoka for the sake of prohibiting slaughtering of a large number of creatures enumerated in a long list.**

21. **Kasibhāradvāja Sutta of the Urugavagga**, “तेन खो पने समयेन कसिभारद्वाजस्स ब्राह्मणस्स पञ्चमत्तानि नङ्गलसत्तानि पयुत्तानि हन्ति वप्पकाले ।”
“Tena kho pana samayena kassibhāradvājassa brāhmaṇassa pañcamattāni nangalasatāni payuttāni honti vappākale.”
22. **Buddhaghosha, Khuddaka, Dhammikasutta** (commentary), 11-14.
23. **Vaseṭhasutta of Mahāvagga**; 3, 9 : This sutta contains sixty three verses pregnant with strong heterodox ideas.
24. **M. Winternitz, History of Indian Literature, Vol. II** (Buddhist Literature and Jaina Literature), translated from German Language into English one by S. Katkar and H. Kohn, University of Calcutta, 1933, pp. 100-101. Winternitz ranked these Gāthās with the best productions of Indian lyric poetry from the Rigvedic hymns to the lyrics of Kālidās and Amaru from the points of view of their force and literary marvels.
25. **Sabhiyasutta** is an extraordinary piece of the Sutta literature combined with long prose text and thrity eight lyrical verses.

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RELIGION AND SOCIETY

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I

Religion in every form, primitive or advanced, has always had a beneficial effect on society. In every religion people worshipped their god or gods and were, in their social and moral behaviour governed by a code, which formed a part of the religious instructions either directly or indirectly. Thus in the **Taittiriya Upaniṣad** (1) the teacher tells the pupil 'satyam vada, dharmam cara, matṛdevo bhava, pitṛdevo bhava, atithidevo bhava.' In the **Singālovāda Sutta** we find a householder daily worshipping the six quarters without knowing the significance of such worship. The Buddha explains to him that the six quarters represented (1) the father and mother (2) teachers (3) wife and children (4) friends and relatives (5) servants and working folk and (6) sramaṇa-brahmaṇas. The Buddha did not say that these practices were meaningless. On the contrary he upheld them. It was a time of regeneration as we find recorded in Buddhist literature particularly in the **Suttapiṭaka**. The Buddha pointed out the excesses particularly slaughters for religious purposes (**yagñas**) and the futility of such **Yagñas** (2). He sought to clear the society of blind belief and strife³. He stressed that salvation lay in individual effort through restraint, renunciation and meditation. He spent his life travelling back and forth throughout **Madhyadeśa** talking to people and reforming them, and sent his disciples to other parts of the country to do likewise. 'He was the first human being to give the world a complete system of morality. He was good for good's sake, he loved for love's sake'⁴. He preached universal love (**Mettā**) and forgiveness⁵. Bimbisāra, Ajātasatru and many other rulers of his time were greatly influenced by the Buddha.

About 300 years later Asoka, the Buddhist Emperor, appeared on the scene, preaching his **dhamma** which actually was an ancient code of moral

and social behaviour (**porāṇā pakitti**)⁶. It comprised kindness (**dayā**), charity (**dāne**), truth (**sace**), purity (**soce**), restraint (**saṃyame**), listening to parents, elders, preceptors, respect for sramaṇas and brahmanas, service to friends, relatives, servants, slaves and neighbours. He forbade cruelty to living beings and slaughter for religious purpose. A unique feature of the Emperor's exhortations was **dhammadāna** or propagation of **dhamma** be every person to every other person^{7a}, to son, to brother, to friends, relatives, neighbours and everybody else. There could scarcely be a better system of mass education than this introduced by Emperor Asoka.

He sought to establish a strong moral fibre and good social behaviour among the people throughout the empire. He exhorted his people not to decry other sects, but to try and discover the essential elements in the faith of others and listen to and discuss doctrines professed by others. Thus they would acquire a broadness of mind and attain concord among themselves^{7b}. Asoka expressed his firm intention to enforce **dhamma** and, wherever necessary, he warned people that they would be punished if they did not conform to **dhamma**. He created the office of **Dhammamahāmātra** to ensure spreading of **dhamma**.

Asoka's edicts discovered so far are scattered from Afghanistan to Bihar and upto Karnataka in the south. He sent ambassadors and missionaries to the west upto Lybia and Greece^{7c}. He instituted medical treatment for both men and animals throughout his own empire as well as in foreign countries^{7d}.

Scholars see influence of Ashoka's missionaries and Buddhism in the monastic communities of the Theraputes of Alexandria and Essenes of the Dead Sea region⁸. They also refer to Clemens (AD 150-218) who spoke of Indians living near Alexandria who were followers of the precepts of 'Boutta' and honoured him as God (9&10). According to Al Biruni countries upto Syria were at one time Buddhist⁹.

Spread of Buddhism due to Asoka's missionaries may have been only incidental, for the Emperor sent them to propagate his **dhamma**^{7c} and to

spread medical treatment of men and animals^{7d}. Conversion was not the objective of the Emperor for in his opinion every religion was good and he urged his subjects to recognize this^{7b}. However Buddha's message of love and forgiveness undoubtedly travelled with his ambassadors and missionaries of **dhamma** and also other monks and thus spread beyond west Asia. The beauty of the message of **dhamma** and **mettā** which was quite contrary to 'eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'¹¹, could not but capture the hearts of the people. It was a message of cheer and hope even to the poor. They now knew that they could attain salvation even if they could not afford rituals.

Christianity arose in the field of a degenerated Jewish religion and society¹². It survived the opposition of the Jews and the violent death of Jesus, and with royal patronage spread all over Europe. Universal love and forgiveness and repentance for sins for salvation were the fundamentals of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

II

The foregoing is a brief sketch touching upon the code of social and moral behaviour as found in religious instructions at different times over a period of a millenium and a half or perhaps longer depending upon the date of the **Vedas**¹³. It can be seen how during this time religion gave direction to society. It also shows degeneration of society with degeneration of religion and its regeneration with regeneration of religion.

The next two millenia saw the rise of Islam and Protestantism. Islam spread to Turkey, North Africa and Central Asia. In India Hinduism survived. Buddhism was virtually swept out. Islam brought to India its own form of society and culture and added a new dimension to the life here. Not long after that the country saw the flowering of thoughts of saintly persons such as Ramananda, Kabir and others and also the birth and development of Urdu, a new language, with poets such as Amir Khusru. Social life in general was greatly enriched by the Ramayana of Kirtivasa in Bengali and

Ramacharitamansa of Tulasidasa. However Hindu society was ridden with casteism, sectarianism and untouchability. Lower castes were denied every scope of upliftment and were oppressed by members of upper castes. People in general remained without material or political advancement. Poverty was widespread. The country was ruled by successive dynasties of Muslim rulers who came across the Himalayas, and then lastly by the British. During this time the official and cultural languages changed to Arabic, Persian and then to English each in turn contributing to the languages and culture of the people. Under the British studies in Indian classical and vernacular languages received new impetus. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism began rediscovering their ancient heritage. But social conditions remained unchanged. Perhaps the strongest voice raised against social inequities was that of Swami Vivekananda. He denounced casteism, sectarianism and untouchability. He called for education and opportunities for upliftment of the so called low castes and backward people. He spoke strongly for emancipation of women. Above all he called for removal of poverty and illiteracy. He said - 'daridra-devo bhava murkha-devo bhava - the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted, let these be your God.'¹⁴ Vivekananda, however, was a sanyasi and lacked the imperial power of Asoka. He and his brother disciples of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa devoted themselves in their humble ways to the service of the people. As taught by Shri Ramakrishna they found that every religion was good and rendered service without distinction of caste and creed.

III

Today when we are nearing the close of the second millenium of our reckoning, we find strife all over the world between religion and religion, between one sect and another, and also between persons or groups of persons seeking power or superiority. In India, casteism has now been elevated to political platform. However, together with untouchability it remains entrenched in the society. Poverty has increased, illiteracy continues to be widespread. There is often an attempt to solve difficult social problems by

means of law. The discussion between **Vassakāra**, the minister of **Ajātāsattu** and the **Buddha** regarding the **Vajjins** as recorded in the **Mahāparinabbāna Sutta** is a shining examples of our ancient wisdom in deciding upon matters of state and society. In this discussion the **Buddha** informed **Vassakāra** that the **Vajjins** had a seven fold code and that they could come to no harm as long as they followed it. The code as stated by the **Buddha** was as follows :¹⁵

1. 'The **Vijjins** hold full and frequent public assemblies.'
2. '**Vijjins** meet together in concord and rise in concord and carry out their undertakings in concord.'
3. 'Enact nothing not already established. Abrogate nothing already enacted. Act in accordance with ancient institutions established in the former days.'
4. 'They esteem, reverse and support their elders and hold it a point of duty to hearken to their words.'
5. 'No women or girls belonging to their clan are detained among them by force or abduction.'
6. 'They honour and esteem and revere and support their own shrines in the town or country and not allow the proper offerings and rites as formerly given and performed to fall into desuetude.'
7. 'Rightful protection, defence and support are provided for **Arhants** among them, so that **Arhants** from a distance may enter the realm and **Arhants** therein may live at ease.'

It may be asked how do the **Vajjin** principles suit the modern world? In the following, we shall try to test the code in application.

1. Today in democratic systems of Government full and frequent public meetings of elected representatives of people are held.

Test : Criminal influence and predetermination of candidates for election on the basis of community etc. are affecting the system in some countries.

2. Even when not in concord it is supposed that the Government is acting in the best interest of the people and the country.

Test : Sometimes factional and even personal interests appear to have the better of the interests of the people or the country.

3. It concerns people's understanding and acceptance of the law enacted. It may not work if not based on existing practice or old law in vogue. Here views of elders are significant as laid down in code 4.

Example : (a) **Education** - Do not interfere in education as established by elders or earlier laws. In application we see that the Governments do not interfere in the matters of Harvard, Princeton, Oxford, Cambridge, Sorbonne and other universities or high schools leading upto them. But the same cannot be said of all countries of today.

(b) **Conservation** - This modern awareness is an ancient heritage of India. In the verse reading '*ārāmaropā vanaropā je janā setu kārakā ...*' the Buddha praises the practice of planting of trees, raising of gardens, building of bridges, establishing watering places etc. as works of great merit. Asoka's inscriptions also speak of planting of trees, digging of wells, and establishing of watering places by him as acts of **dhamma**. Even in recent times we have seen rich people of the country digging tanks and planting trees as acts of religious merit. Today the concept stands abolished or discarded.

We are now facing problems arising from denudation of forests and pollution or overdrawing of our water resources. India is not the only country facing these problems.

The preceding paragraphs show that a country may run into difficulties if established practices are abolished by means of laws without full consideration.

4. In most developed countries esteem support for elders to exist.

5. Respect for women is a social education and training imparted and ingrained in a man from his childhood. It is in turn rooted in religious instruction. Problem in this area arises when people move away from religious instruction and established social behaviour.
6. This deals with the attitude towards religion which is in general positive and reverential in developed countries. In developing countries there is a strong faith and devotion among population in general, but blind faith and rituals have been recently gaining ground.
7. This speaks of the promotion of cultural intercourse with the outside world.

Religion is an inalienable component of human mind. We have seen that even when religion and its practice were banned they remained as an undercurrent among the people and surfaced the moment the prohibitions were removed. Through its belief in a super human controlling power religion upholds everything good in man and lays the foundation of 'good society'. Deviation from the tenets of religion relative to the society gives rise to problems. These deviations arise from cupidity or desire for power. The poor, the deprived and the oppressed suffer silently. There are societies which are self sustaining so that in them the question of poverty does not arise. The thoughts of deprivation or gaining of superiority at the cost of others is remarkably absent or practically non-existent in such societies. The Zoroastrian society is one such society. The strifes of today are symptoms of departure from religious teachings. It is now necessary once again for religion to establish moral values in every respect. We have the formula for intensive action in Asoka's **dhamma** and **dhammadāna**. Asoka said that he owed a debt to his people which he wanted to discharge by establishing **dhamma**. In the modern system of Government the leader of a political party in power told members of his party in the parliament to remember that they were servants and the people were the masters. And for what is today known as the developing world nothing is more pressing as an objective as upliftment of the

poor - 'daridra-devo bhava murkha-devo bhava' as Swami Vivekananda said. The problem concerns a large section of the society and there could be no better way of addressing it than serving the poor and the illiterate as our God.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRAHMAVIHĀRA IN MODERN SOCIETY

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This paper is commenced with the discussion on the definition of the Brahmavihāra and its four constituents for better understanding the significance of the Brahmavihāra in modern society which comes in later part of this paper.

Brahmavihāra - the term is constituted of two words, viz., 'brahma' and 'vihāra' etc. The word 'brahma' is generally referred to 'deity' or 'god' etc. It has several meanings when 'brahma' is used as an adjectival form. But preference is given to 'divine', 'sublime', 'ideal', 'best' etc. Prof. Malalasekera refers to 'the highest' or 'the perfect' as the meaning of 'brahma'². According to Prof. Childers 'brahma' stands for 'best', 'excellent'³. Rev. A. P. Buddhadatta Mahāthera suggests that the words like 'chaste', 'highest', 'excellent' etc. are meant for the word 'brahma'.⁴

The applied meaning of the word 'vihāra' is 'state of life', 'condition', 'mode of life'⁵ etc. Prof. Childers also suggests 'state of life', 'condition' for 'vihāra'⁶. According to Rev. A.P. Buddhadatta Mahāthera 'vihāra' stands for 'mode of life'⁷.

Thus Brahmavihāra stands for 'sublime or divine state of mind'⁸, 'excellent or perfect state'⁹. According to Mahāthera Narada, 'Brahmavihāra may be rendered by modes of sublime conduct, sublime states, or divine abodes.'¹⁰ Prof. Malalasekera suggests 'divine states'¹¹ for the said term.

In Buddhism, Brahmavihāra is a certain kind of meditational practice. The meditator brings into being four attitudes, viz., (i) Mettā, (ii) Karuṇā,

(iii) Muditā, (iv) Upekkhā etc. through it and radiates them out. According to Prof. Malalasekera, 'Brahma-vihāra is a name for the four practices of mental development'.¹² It is found in the ninth chapter, called 'Brahmaviharaniddeso', of Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga, '... ... mettā karuṇā muditā upekkhā ti imesu catusu brahmavihāresu'¹³ The Visuddhimagga further says, ... 'setthtthena tāva niddosabhāvena cettha brahmavihāratā veditabbā. sattesu sammāpaṭipattibhāvena hi setthā etc viharā. yathā ca brahmāno niddosacittā viharanti, evaṃ etehi sampayuttā yogino brahmasamā hutvā viharanti ti setthtthena niddosabhāvena ca brahmavihārā ti vuccanti'.¹⁴ Bhikku Ñāṇamoli's translation of the text follows, 'The divineness of the abiding (brahmavihāratā) should be understood here in the sense of best and in the sense of immaculate. For these abidings are the best in being the right attitude towards beings. And just as Brahmā Gods abide with immaculate minds, so the meditators who associate themselves with these abidings abide on an equal footing with Brahmā Gods. So they are called divine abidings in the sense of best and in the sense of immaculate'.¹⁵

Nalinaksha Dutt suggests, '... These are so called because they make the minds of the adepts pure like those of Brahmakāyikā gods and after death they are reborn in the highest plane'.¹⁶ E. J. Thomas suggests, ... it is believed that one who practises this form of concentration is reborn in the Brahmaworld.¹⁷ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica says, 'Brahmavihāra, in Buddhist philosophy, is the four noble practices of mental development through which men can attain subsequent rebirth in the Brahman heaven'.¹⁸

These four sublime virtues are also called 'appamañña',¹⁹ i.e., boundlessness or infinitude or unrestricted. They are so known since these four practices give happiness to infinite living beings. They find no obstacle or limit in exercising the four states and should be furthered towards all beings including animals.

Four states of the Brahmavihāra are described here. (i) Mettā – The first divine virtue 'mettā' may be rendered by 'friendliness or love',²⁰ 'loving kindness or goodwill'²¹ etc. Mettā is the sincere wish for welfare and

happiness of all beings without any choice. Friendliness signifies the state of a friend. It refers to fraternal affection, unbounded love or friendly emotion, being freed from lustful attachment. It has the feature of promoting good will. Filling the heart with love and the removal of hatred are the effects of it. Its cause is to attach others with oneself in affection. Interpreting 'mettā' Visuddhimagga says, '... .. mejjati ti mettā. siniyhatī ti attho. mitte vā bhavā, mittassa vā esā pavattī ti pi mettā.'²² 'it is melting (mejjati), thus it is loving kindness (mettā); it is solvent (siniyhati) is the meaning. Also; it comes about with respect to a friend (mitta), or it is behaviour towards a friend, thus it is loving kindness (mettā).'²³

Meditation on mettā is to be practised through oneself firstly and gradually to be expanded towards all beings, without making any difference. Thus he or she mingles with all and egoism is removed for ever.

(ii) Karuṇā – The second sublime state 'karuṇā' is translated as 'compassion or pity'²⁴ 'mercy'²⁵ etc. It is the feeling of the heart for removing others' pain or suffering. For the sake of others' happiness, it bears pain of others. Its manifestation is peace. Thus Visuddhimagga defines 'karuṇā' – 'paradukkhe sati sādhanam hadayakampanam karoti ti karuṇā. kiṇāti vā paradukkham, himsati vināseṭi ti karuṇā. kiriyati va dukkhitesu, pharanavasena pasariyati ti karuṇā.'²⁶ 'When there is suffering in others it causes (karoti) good peoples' hearts to be moved (kampana), thus it is compassion (karuṇā). Or alternatively, it combats (kiṇāti) others' suffering, attacks and demolishes it, thus it is compassion. Or alternatively it is scattered (kiriyati) upon those who suffer, it is extended to them by pervasion, thus it is compassion (karuṇā).'²⁷

Concentration on karuṇā should be extended towards all grief-stricken, suffering and destitute peoples irrespective of any distinction.

(iii) Muditā – The third divine state 'muditā' is rendered by 'sympathetic joy or gladness'²⁸ 'appreciative joy',²⁹ etc. It implies rejoicing at others' success, happiness or prosperity. Often it seems that one cannot tolerate

looking or hearing the successful progress or achievement of others. They enjoy their failures but cannot bear with their success. Instead of praising or congratulating the successful ones, they try to ruin and condemn them. The objective of *muditā* is the eradication of jealousy which hinders free exercising of *muditā*. Interpreting '*muditā*' *visuddhimagga* states – '*modanti tāya tamsamangino, sayarh vā modati, modanamattameva vā taṃ ti muditā*'.³⁰ 'Those endowed with it are glad (*modanti*), or it itself is glad (*modati*), or it is the mere act of being glad (*modana*), thus it is gladness (*mudita*).'³¹

Meditation on *muditā* should be practised towards all happy, prosperous and successful beings.

(iv) *Upekkhā* – The fourth sublime virtue '*upekkhā*' may be translated as 'equanimity or evenmindedness',³² 'neutrality'.³³ Etymologically *upekkhā* stands for 'looking impartially, viewing justly' i.e., without favour or disfavour, without attachment or disinclination. *Upekkhā* is a balanced state of mind which enables one to keep the mind unaffected by attraction or repulsion. It has the characteristic of impartiality. Its expression is the suppression both of attachment and aversion. *Upekkhā* teaches that one should not be elated or pleased when he or she is honoured or praised, as well as one should not be enraged or depressed when he or she is insulted or reviled or blamed. '*Upekkhā*' has been defined in the *Visuddhimagga* thus – '*averā hontū ti ādibyaṭṭāpārahānena majjhatabhāvūpagamanena ca upekkhatī ti upekkhā*'.³⁴ 'It looks on at (*upekkhati*), abandoning such interestedness as thinking 'May they be free from enmity' and having recourse to neutrality, thus it is equanimity (*upekkhā*).'³⁵

Concentration on *upekkhā* is to be extended towards all beings equally, possessing of two opposite qualities like the good and the bad, the loved and the unloved, the pleasant and the unpleasant.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRAHMAVIHĀRA IN MODERN SOCIETY

Everywhere today it is seen that conflict, bitterness, distrust, misunderstanding, rivalry, disintegration, indignity are increasing day by day.

Starting from our families, then in societies, regions, nations and upto international stage such negative harmful effects are prevailing. In this age scientific researches have produced several measures to entertain our daily needs which help us to smoothen our living more effectively. Peoples have been too much attractive and restless to attain those amenities. They are running after the material objects blindly to have more possession, more power, more domination. Those who fail to acquire it they get furious and come to conflict with those who have achieved it. Far more than two thousand five hundred years ago Buddha uttered the solution of this situation through the preaching of 'Brahmavihara'. We have ignorance, illusion, greed, lust so that we cannot realise bitter consequence or the material objects for what we are engaged in conflict, rivalry to get the means which are the causes of false happiness in leading our lifestyle in luxury. In such a turmoil situation we should be enlightened through right knowledge and by discarding illusion, greed, lust etc. For the peace, prosperity and happiness of every citizen of the universe here lies the significance of Brahmavihāra which is discussed below on the basis of four divine states individually.

(i) *Mettā* – Significance of loving kindness (*mettā*) to be understood from the following examples.

In our families more or less everyday several small incidents occur, such conversations happen among family members which may create misunderstanding, disunity and even separation may take place. But if every member being considerate with others don't bother about what they spoke or misbehaviour done and try utmost to maintain loving kindness, the family ties would be more stronger, long lasting and nothing can disunite such families.

India is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious country. All over India there are peoples living peacefully for their livelihoods originally hail from different origins. Everybody shares their own culture, views, ideas with others through the ages, in this way a peaceful co-existence is prevailing. Thus essence of *mettā* is active in everyone's mind. But there are few anti-forces who are demanding separate independent states or independent ruled

zone on the basis of their ethnicity or language or religion etc. e.g., demand of Jharkhand to be formed with some portions of Bihar, West Bengal and some other states; Khalisthan with some portion of Jammu & Kashmir and some other states; Uttarakhand with some portion of Uttarpradesh and some other states etc. Such initiatives are really serious threat to the integration, peace and security of any country. From one, several groups may demand their own independent lands tomorrow.

Even today in several parts of the world there prevails a rivalry between peoples on the basis of colour. The complexion of skin is the source of conflict for several years. From childhood brain-washing is being done to react with others on the basis of skin colour. M.K. Gandhi was thrown out of the train in South Africa, the only reason was the complexion of his skin. This is not the culture of mettā. Though it is a good sign that world-wide the apartheid is now being hated most and the scenario is changing fastly.

As days are passing, science and technology have developed several measures for the happiness, welfare and improvement of daily living standard of the human beings, but peoples are misusing the scientific progress by utilising it for the destruction of the human civilization. Buddha's peaceful followers in Hiroshima and Nagasaki of Japan were caused to death by the atom bombs. In this war-afflicted chaotic world, nations are decorating themselves with arms and frightened of one another. Nuclear missiles are causing danger to the human life which is in need of universal loving kindness so that every body may reside in perfect peace and harmony. To make it effective all nations should try to substitute loving kindness (mettā) with the devastating weapons and dominate the world with love, then peace and happiness will prevail in the world. The latest Gulf War exhibited the up-to-dated scientific progress of weapons as well as devastated the humanity, i.e., destruction of mettā. War creates innumerable orphans, mother loses her only earning son, wife loses her beloved husband, fit becomes crippled and so on. Treaties for maintaining love, peace and fraternity are being signed between nations and are being just filed up later. No effective measures are being taken

to materialize the treaties. Instead of that, number of wars are increasing. S.A.A.R.C. has been formed mainly for the purpose of maintaining unity, fraternity and peace in the South Asian regional countries. But the charter is being violated as India is facing attacks occasionally in border states from neighbouring countries. Thus peace, happiness and unity is not ever possible through the signing of charters only but it should be cultured mentally, from the depth of heart we have to realize the value of friendliness (*mettā*). Then only the significance of *mettā* will be best understood in individual families, societies, in the national and international levels.

(ii) *Karuṇā* – In the world there are innumerable persons – poor, diseases, destitute, disabled and orphans who need compassion – care and sympathy as they are living beings ultimately. The animals also deserve compassion, care and sympathy. The valuable question arises now that who will attend those ill-fated persons in their hard times. It is satisfying that some wealthy developed countries are helping under-developed countries. In all countries charitable organizations have been formed to give possible assistance to the poor and sick ones. Several countries have taken effective measures to prevent and cure diseases. Some doctors treat their needy patients without fees. Selected hospitals and freedispensaries are helping the poor and the needy patients.

It is often remembered that Mother Teresa was the embodiment of compassion. Leaving behind all material attractions she came to India from Yugoslavia for doing social works. Mother Teresa was the mother and best playmate of the orphans, she used to feed the patients of deadly diseases in her own hands, she used to treat the wounds of the patients of contagious diseases, she was the best companion of the aged and disabled ones. Above all she was the saviour of the needy and distressed ones around the world. She did not rest satisfied until the sufferings of the victims are alleviated.

Nowadays peoples have been caring towards the animals also. Government organizations and charitable trusts have launched treatment centres for the animals. There are also feeding centres for deserted animals. It is

punishable offence if anybody is found hurting or shooting some rare animals. Few days back the owner of a circus company was arrested in charge of performing shows with some semi-blind lions. World Wildlife Fund is functioning successfully for preserving and caring animals of rare species. Occassionally it is found in the media that some peoples are agitating and fasting in against of both killing animals and using animal products. Thus removing the pain, suffering and grief from the ill-fated persons and animals and making them happy the significance of *karuṇā* will be realized.

(iii) **Muditā** – Significance of sympathetic joy (*muditā*) may be discussed by sighting the examples below.

It may be that in a certain family there are two brothers. Among them the elder brother is more brilliant and stands first in the class whereas the younger brother is a mediocre student who just passes in the examinations. At the time of getting mark-sheets the younger one congratulates the elder one with appreciative complements. Thus the younger one practises sympathetic joy (*muditā*). Younger one has no jealousy or envy in his mind instead he takes suggestions and helps to improve his educational standard. So he gets benefits and later he improves and stands second in the class. But being mediocre student if the younger one becomes angry and jealous and does not take suggestions from the elder brother, he may further deteriorate in studies, his mental peace will be destroyed. Ultimately rivalry will grow between two brothers. Similarly one country should appreciate another country's rare achievements, one should rejoice over another's welfare and prosperity. Thus both the nations will survive peacefully. Otherwise realtionship among them will be worst, ultimately there may be war between them.

Sympathetic joy takes place when we send congratulatory greeting cards to one who passes an examination. He or she gets encouraged and gains incentive from it to do far better in future. Also he or she thinks of the senders that there are well-wishers who wish and acknowledge his or her success. As a result the relationship between them becomes more close and strong.

Also one race should be happy over the growing prosperity of another race, one religion should appreciate another one, one institution should rejoice over the improvement of another one. one business establishment should acknowledge the achievement of another one – then the significance of muditā will be successful.

(iv) Upekkhā - Equanimity (upekkhā) is essential to maintain peace, unity and harmony everywhere.

Suppose a boy is passing by the road and another boy taunts him. The former boy does not get angry, thus he performs equanimity. Whereas if the former boy gets angry and attacks him, both of them will be wounded and rivalry will grow among them consequently. This is not equanimity.

Two friends saw a single attractive, beautiful and sweet-smelling flower in a garden. Both of them become attracted to the flower and they behave against equanimity. Then the first one plucks that flower before the second one gets it. The first friend becomes pleased and the second one gets depressed not getting the flower. Both of them again behave against equanimity. Their friendly relation starts deteriorating on the issue of a flower only.

In the court-room the honourable judge plays the neutral role. He issues verdict impartially on the basis of arguments between the lawyers on behalf of the plaintiff and the litigant. Lawyers may argue partially to save their clients. But it is the responsibility of the judge that the verdict should be impartial. Because the question of life and death of the plaintiff and the litigant is involved.

In a democratic country like India His Excellency the President performs an impartial role for the sake of country's sovereignty, peace, integrity and security. Thus the Presidents or substitute officials of all democratic nations world-over culture equanimity (upekkhā) for the universal brotherhood, peace, harmony and security.

CONCLUSION

Meditation on Brahmavihāra (Sublime States) creates a condition of mind that helps to deal with living beings appropriately. The first one of the four constituents of the Brahmavihāra, viz., mettā (friendliness) which promotes goodwill among beings without any discrimination. The second state called karuṇā (compassion) i.e., serving or eliminating the cause of suffering, pain of the ill-fated ones dedicatedly. Muditā (appreciative joy) is the third state which is expressing gladness upon the happiness of others. The fourth constituent named upekkhā (even-mindedness) is expressed as remaining neutral at both favourable and unfavourable situations of life. The purpose of these four stages of the Brahmavihāra is the extinction of ill-will, cruelty, envy and lust respectively. The Brahmavihāra is essential for maintaining all situations smoothly arising from social living. Tension prevailing everywhere will be removed, peace-making will be aggravated by it. Social barriers will be vanished and community with harmony will be formed everywhere.

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आधुनिक समाज में बौद्ध धर्म एवं अन्य धर्मों की प्रासंगिकता

चन्द्रपाल शैलानी

“धर्म मनुष्य के लिये है, मनुष्य धर्म के लिये नहीं” । यह कथन है बोधिसत्व बावा साहेब डॉ० भीमराव अम्बेडकर का । “आधुनिक समाज में बौद्ध धर्म एवं अन्य धर्मों की प्रासंगिकता” पर चर्चा करने से पहले धर्म के अर्थ अथवा परिभाषा को समझना आवश्यक है ।

धर्म क्या है ?

धर्म बहुत व्यापक और बहुआयामी शब्द है । विभिन्न धर्मों के मनीषियों ने अपने-अपने तरीके से धर्म की व्याख्या की है जिसमें उनकी वैचारिक भिन्नता तो दृष्टिगोचर होती है किन्तु धर्म का मूल एवं सर्वमान्य लक्ष्य एक ही है, मानवता की सेवा । धर्म, जाति अथवा वर्ग विशेष से कहीं ऊपर उठकर सम्पूर्ण मानवता के लिये बल्कि समस्त प्राणी मात्र के लिये होता है । धर्म मानव-मानव को जोड़ता है तोड़ता नहीं । मनुष्यों के बीच आपस में विभेद और असमानता पैदा करना धर्म का काम नहीं है । धर्म के नाम पर शोषण, अत्याचार, रक्तपात और युद्ध की आज्ञा नहीं दी जा सकती । धर्म से किसी का अहित नहीं हो सकता । जो धर्म मानवता के विपरीत कार्य करता अथवा प्रेरणा देता है, वह धर्म नहीं अधर्म है, प्रपंच है, षड्यन्त्र है । मानवता विहीन धर्म की कल्पना करना मूर्खता है, अज्ञानता है ।

समाज और धर्म :

मानव समूह ही समाज का रूप है । जब से मनुष्य ने सभ्य संसार में प्रवेश किया है, उसे धर्म की आवश्यकता महसूस हुई है क्योंकि समाज की व्यवस्था और उसकी प्रगति बिना धर्म के सम्भव नहीं है । समाज के सदस्यों के बीच चेतना, जागृति, एकात्मकता, भ्रातृत्व, मैत्री और आपसी सम्बन्धों की अनुभूति कराने का काम धर्म ही करता है । धर्म के अभाव में सामाजिक जीवन सारहीन है, महत्त्वहीन है । सामाजिक सम्बन्धों की शुद्धि में धर्म महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाता है । धर्म के आधार पर ही सामाजिक मान्यताएँ बनती और बिगड़ती हैं । सामाजिक आचार-विचार तथा नियमों का मूल स्रोत धर्म ही रहा है । सामाजिक व्यवस्था भंग अथवा अवरूद्ध होने पर धर्म ही मार्ग प्रशस्त करता है । धर्म के बिना सामाजिक जीवन का विकास सम्भव नहीं है । सामाजिक हित में मनुष्य को अपने वैयक्तिक एवं पारिवारिक हितों का परित्याग करना पड़ता है ।

आधुनिक युग में धर्मों की प्रासंगिकता :

धर्म और समाज की संक्षिप्त व्याख्या करने के पश्चात् हम आज के विषय “आधुनिक समाज में बौद्ध धर्म एवं अन्य धर्मों की प्रासंगिकता” पर आते हैं। बौद्ध धर्म तथा संसार के दूसरे प्रमुख धर्मों में सबसे बड़ा तथा मौलिक अन्तर है। जहाँ अन्य धर्म ईश्वरवादी हैं वहाँ बौद्ध धर्म ही एकमात्र धर्म है जो सम्पूर्ण रूप से मानवतावादी है। इतिहास साक्षी है कि इस धरती पर बुद्ध ही पहले व्यक्ति हुए हैं जिन्होंने कहा कि मनुष्य स्वयं अपने प्रयास से अपना उद्धार कर सकता है। उसे किसी ईश्वर अथवा दैवी शक्ति या पुरोहित-पुजारी की आवश्यकता नहीं है। उन्होंने कहा “अत्तदीपो भव” — अपने दीपक आप बनो, अत्त नावो भव — अपने स्वामी आप बनो, अत्ताहे अत्तनो नाथो कोहि नाथो परोसिया — मनुष्य अपना स्वामी आप है, भला कोई दूसरा उसका स्वामी क्या होगा।” बौद्ध धर्म अनीश्वरवादी है। बुद्ध ने ईश्वर के अस्तित्व को ही स्वीकार नहीं किया। जबकि अन्य धर्म ईश्वरवाद के पोषक हैं। ईश्वरवाद अन्धविश्वास को जन्म देता है। मेरा आशय किसी धर्म विशेष की आलोचना या अवमानना करना नहीं है किन्तु सच्चाई से पर्दा उठाकर वास्तविकता को संसार के सामने लाना आवश्यक है। यदि हम अपने भारतीय समाज के परिप्रेक्ष्य में देखें तो इतिहास साक्षी है कि यहाँ एक धर्म विशेष के एजेन्ट अतीत से अब तक जनमानस को अन्धविश्वास, रुढ़िवाद, पाखण्डवाद, भाग्यवाद, कर्मकाण्ड, कुरीतियों और वर्ण-व्यवस्था की जंजीरों में जकड़े हुये हैं जिसके कारण समाज अस्पृश्यता, जातिवाद, ऊँच-नीच और अलगाव जैसे भयंकर रोगों से पीड़ित रहा है और आज भी है।

आज का युग विज्ञान का युग है। इसलिये आधुनिक समाज के लिये वही धर्म प्रासंगिक माना जायेगा जो विज्ञान की कसौटी पर खरा उतरे। बौद्ध धर्म अपने जन्म से ही उन प्राचीन मान्यताओं, परम्पराओं और रुढ़ियों का घोर विरोधी रहा है जो समाज को खोखला करती चली आ रही हैं। बुद्ध संसार में पहले व्यक्ति हुए हैं जिन्होंने मानव के अस्तित्व को स्वीकार किया और समाज को सर्वोपरि माना। संघीय जीवन शैली और सामाजिक चेतना बौद्ध धर्म की विशिष्ट देन है। “चरथभिक्खवे चारिक। बहुजन हिताय-बहुजन सुखाय। लोकानुक्कम्प अत्थाय हिताय सुखाय देवमनुस्सान देसेथ॥” अर्थात् भिक्षुओ! बहुजनों के हित के लिये, बहुजनों के सुख के लिये, लोक पर दया करने के लिये, देवताओं और मनुष्यों के प्रयोजन के लिये, उनके हित के लिये, उनके सुख के लिये, विचरण करो। बुद्ध का भिक्षु संघ को यह उपदेश उनकी जनकल्याणकारी भावनाओं को प्रमाणित करता है।

पंचशील :

आज के अशांति एवं भौतिकवादी समाज में शान्ति और सद्भाव स्थापित करने की परम आवश्यकता है। मानव कल्याण का यह महान पवित्र कार्य प्रगल्भ बुद्ध के पंचशील के

सिद्धान्तों पर अमल करके ही हो सकता है। बौद्ध धर्म अहिंसा का प्रबल समर्थक है। जहाँ आधुनिक समाज हिंसा को ही अपना धर्म मानने लगा है, वहाँ बुद्ध ने अहिंसा का पाठ पढ़ाया है। उन्होंने सामान्यजन को “पाणातिपाता बेरमणी सिक्खा पद समादियामि” प्राणि हिंसा से विरत रहने की शिक्षा दी है। बिना अनुमति के किसी की कोई चीज लेना चोरी कहलाती है और इस तरह का कार्य लड़ाई-झगड़े का कारण बन जाता है इसलिये बुद्ध ने “अदित्रदाना बेरमणी सिक्खापद समादियामी” चोरी से विरत रहने की शिक्षा दी है। अपनी स्त्री को छोड़ किसी दूसरी स्त्री के साथ कामाचार करना या इसी प्रकार के कुकृत्य करना व्यभिचार माना जाता है। इसके लिये बुद्ध ने “कामेसुमिच्छाचारा बेरमणी सिक्खापदं समादियामी” पर-स्त्रीगमन एवं नीति विरुद्ध कामाचार से विरत रहने की शिक्षा दी है। असत्य बोलना महापाप माना गया है। कठोर वचन और चुगली करना भी मानव मर्यादा के प्रतिकूल है। इसीलिये बुद्ध ने “मुसावादा बेरमणी सिक्खापदं समादियामी” झूठ बोलने से विरत रहने की शिक्षा दी है। मादक पदार्थों का सेवन मनुष्य को विवेकशून्य बना देता है और वह पाशविक प्रवृत्ति का बन जाता है। अतः बुद्ध ने “सुरामेरय मज्जपमादठाना बेरमणी सिक्खापदं समादियामि” मदिरा एवं अन्य मादक पदार्थों के सेवन से विरत रहने की शिक्षा दी है।

आष्टांगिक मार्ग :

बुद्ध का दर्शन प्रमुख रूप से चार आर्यसत्त्यों पर आधारित है। ये आर्य सत्य हैं 1. दुःख, 2. दुःख का कारण, 3. दुःख निरोध और 4. दुःख निरोध का मार्ग। बौद्ध धर्मशील, समाधि और प्रज्ञा के आदर्शों से प्रतिमंडित है। शील सभी कुशल कर्मों का आधार है। यह कायिक, वाचसिक और मानसिक शुद्धता का अधिवचन है। समाधि मन की एकाग्रता और प्रज्ञा कुशल चित्त से युक्त विषयना ज्ञान का अधिवचन है। इनके माध्यम से मनुष्य दुःख से मुक्त हो सकता है, यह भगवान् तथामत की मान्यता है। शील, समाधि और प्रज्ञा का विस्तृत रूप ही बुद्ध का आष्टांगिक मार्ग है। सत्यक दृष्टि, सत्यक संकल्प, सत्यक वाणी, सत्यक कर्मन्त, सत्यक जीविका, सत्यक व्यायाम, सत्यक स्मृति और सत्यक समाधि। ये आष्टांगिक मार्ग के आठ अंग हैं। भगवान् बुद्ध द्वारा प्रदर्शित इस आष्टांगिक मार्ग को ही बौद्ध धर्म में मध्यम मार्ग कहा गया है। यह मध्यम मार्ग पूर्णतया जन-मानस के लिये है। बुद्ध की मान्यता है कि जन-मानस दुःख से ग्रस्त है, उनको मुक्ति चाहिये जिसे वे इस मार्ग के द्वारा सहजता से प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। यह वही मार्ग है जो व्यक्ति को स्वतन्त्र विचारक और कुशल कर्मों तो बनाता ही है, उसका नैतिक और मानसिक विकास भी करता है। इसलिये इस मध्यम-मार्ग को बुद्ध ने आँख-देने वाला, ज्ञान कसनेवाला और शक्ति देने वाला कल्याणकारी मार्ग बताया है। पंचशील का पालन करने और

आष्टांगिक मार्ग का अनुसरण करने से व्यक्ति के अन्दर निम्नलिखित सदगुणों का आविर्भाव होता है जिसे बौद्ध धर्म में दस पारमिताओं के नाम से जाना जाता है। ये पारमितियाँ हैं—दान पारमिता, शील पारमिता, निष्काम पारमिता, प्रज्ञा पारमिता, वीर्य पारमिता, क्षान्ति पारमिता, सत्य पारमिता, अहिंसा पारमिता, मैत्री पारमिता और उपेक्षा पारमिता।

ब्रह्म-विहार :

बौद्ध धर्म की यह दृढ़ मान्यता है कि मनुष्य के चित्त को अज्ञानता, क्रोध, लोभ और बैर जैसी बुराइयों दूषित करती हैं। बुद्ध ने कहा है, समस्त बुराइयों का शमन करो और अच्छाइयों को अपनाओ। चित्त को पवित्र रखो, यही मुक्ति का मार्ग है। इन बुराइयोंके उन्मूलन से, ईर्ष्या, स्वार्थ, पारवारिक, सामाजिक एवं अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय विवादों, युद्ध तथा दुर्लव्यवस्था को समाप्त किया जा सकता है। बौद्ध धर्म में इन समस्याओं के समाधान के लिये चार ब्रह्म-विहारों का प्रावधान है जिनके पालन से मानव चित्त की मलीनता नष्ट हो जाती है और वह विशुद्ध हो जाता है जिससे शान्ति, सामाजिक सद्भाव और अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय भ्रातृत्व की स्थापना के लिये अनुकूल वातावरण तैयार करने में सहायता मिलती है। ये चार ब्रह्म विहार हैं—मैत्री, करुणा, मुदिता और उपेक्षा।

कतु-संघा-वत्यु :

सामाजिक जीवन को सरस, सलिल, मधुर, मैत्रीपूर्ण एवं व्यावहारिक बनाने के लिये बौद्ध धर्म में चार आधारभूत सिद्धान्तों (लोकसेवाओं) का वर्णन है जिन्हें कतु-संघा-वत्यु कहते हैं। ये सिद्धान्त हैं—दान, प्रिय वचन, अर्थाचारिया और समानता। बौद्ध धर्म धन-सम्पत्ति के न्याय-संगत वितरण का पक्षपाती है। दान केवल धन-सम्पत्ति के रूप में ही नहीं होता बल्कि बौद्धिक एवं अध्यात्मिक दान भी दिया जाता है। बुद्ध ने धर्म-दान को सबसे बड़ा दान मानकर उसकी प्रशंसा की है। “सुब्बदानम धम्मदानम जिनाति”। प्रियवचन का अर्थ है मधुरवाणी। मनुष्य की वाणी में महान शक्ति समाहित है। यदि इसका दुरुपयोग किया गया तो बहुत बड़ी हानि हो सकती है और सदुपयोग किया तो अत्यन्त लाभ प्राप्त हो सकता है। वाणी तभी प्रभावशाली हो सकती है जब वह मधुर हो और सुननेवाले को आकर्षित करे। अर्थाचारिया का अर्थ है स्वयं अपने तथा दूसरों के लिये लाभ और कल्याण के काम करना। समानता का अर्थ ऊँच-नीच, अमीर-गरीब, ज्ञानी-अज्ञानी, जाति-वर्ण और वंश का भेद किये बिना सबके साथ सामान व्यवहार करना और सबके साथ बिना किसी पक्षपात के न्याय करना। इसी सिद्धान्त के आधार पर बुद्ध ने अपने धर्म के द्वार सभी के लिये खोल दिये थे। उपालि नाई, सोपाक अछूत, सुणीत भनी, प्रकृति चण्डालिका, सुप्रबुद्ध कोढ़ी, आम्रपाली नर्तकी और अंगुलिमाल जैसे खूँखार डाकू भगवान बुद्ध के संघ में न केवल प्रवर्जित हुए बल्कि अर्हत को प्राप्त हुए। बुद्ध ने ही विश्व में सर्वप्रथम अमानवोचित, अपमानजनक और असमानता पर आधारित जाति-प्रथा एवं वर्ण-व्यवस्था के विरुद्ध

आवाज उठाई। स्वयं भगवान बुद्ध ने "सुत्त-निपात" में कहा है कि जन्म से कोई शूद्र या ब्राह्मण नहीं होता। उन्होंने जाति एवं वर्ण-व्यवस्था का खण्डन करके सिद्ध किया है कि सभी मनुष्य एक समान हैं। उन्होंने कहा है कि "जिस प्रकार गंगा, यमुना, सरयू, राप्ती, गण्डक आदि नदियाँ जब समुद्र में मिल जाती हैं तो उनका अपना अस्तित्व समाप्त हो जाता है और वे सब महासमुद्र के नाम से जानी जाती हैं। ऐसे ही भिक्षुओं, ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रीय, वैश्य और शूद्र ये चारों वर्ण तथागत के बताए धर्म-विनय में प्रवृत्त हो जाते हैं तो पहले नाम-गोत्र को छोड़ श्रमण के नाम से ही जाने जाते हैं।

महायान बौद्ध धर्म में बोधिसत्व को जीवन का आदर्श माना गया है और करुणा का प्रतीक। इसमें असंख्य बोधिसत्वों की रचना की गई है। प्रत्येक बोधिसत्व सर्वव्यापी है और वह संसार के समस्त प्राणियों को दुख से मुक्त करके उनके उद्धार की प्रतिज्ञा करता है तत्पश्चात् वह स्वयं अपनी मुक्ति की प्राप्ति के लिये प्रयत्न करता है। महायान दर्शन के अनुसार बोधिसत्व परकल्याण के उद्देश्य की पूर्ति के लिए छः पारमिताओं दान, शील, शान्ति, वीर्य, ध्यान और प्रज्ञा की भावना करता है जो उसकी व्यक्तिगत शुद्धि के साथ ही उसे महान कारुणिक एवं मानवतावादी बनाती है साथ ही उन्हें सामाजिक दायित्व का बोध भी कराती है जिसके लिए वह अपना जीवन अर्पित करता है।

बौद्ध धर्म विभिन्न रोगों से पीड़ित आधुनिक समाज के लिये चिकित्सा-शास्त्र का काम दे सकता है क्योंकि आज भी समाज ऊँच-नीच, झूठा-सच्चा, जातिवाद, साम्प्रदायिकता और निहित स्वार्थ जैसे रोगों से ग्रस्त है। बुद्ध के महान उपदेश, सिद्धान्त और शिक्षाएँ सुदियों से मानव कल्याण के स्रोत रहे हैं और आज भी ये पहले से कहीं अधिक प्रासंगिक, सामयिक, सार्थक एवं उपयोगी हैं। बाबा साहेब डॉ० भीमराव अम्बेडकर के अनुसार "बुद्ध का धर्म एक सामाजिक संदेश है। बुद्ध ने समाज में शान्ति एवं सद्भाव बनाये रखने के लिये न्याय, मैत्री, स्वतन्त्रता, समानता और भातृत्व भाव की शिक्षा दी है।" बुद्ध के नाम पर आज तक किसी का सामाजिक, आर्थिक, राजनैतिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक शोषण नहीं हुआ है। बौद्ध धर्म मनुष्य की उच्चतम नैतिक चेतना का प्रतीक है और उसमें मानव जीवन की गम्भीरतम समस्याओं का समाधान विद्यमान है। आज जबकि संसार में लोग एक-दूसरे को नीचा दिखाने को आतुर हों, मनुष्य-मनुष्य की जान का प्यासा हो, एक दूसरे की धन-सम्पत्ति और जमीन हड़पने को व्याकुल हो, विभिन्न राष्ट्रों के बीच तनाव, भेदभाव, प्रतिस्पर्धा और शस्त्रों की होड़ लगी हो और विश्व पर युद्ध के बादल मँडरा रहे हों तो ऐसे समय में बुद्ध के मार्ग पर चलकर ही मानवजाति को विनाश के कगार से उबारा जा सकता है।

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आधुनिक समाज में बौद्ध धर्म की प्रासंगिकता

डॉ० देवेन्द्र प्रसाद

अध्यक्ष, पालि विभाग

के० एल० एस० कॉलेज, नवादा

आधुनिक युग में विज्ञान ने भौतिक क्षेत्र में काफी उन्नति की है, परन्तु इससे मानव सुखी होने के साथ-साथ अशान्त भी हुआ है। इससे स्पष्ट होता है कि सिर्फ भौतिक पदार्थों पर प्रभुत्व प्राप्त कर लेना ही सुख के लिये पर्याप्त नहीं है, मानव मनोवृत्ति को धर्म के माध्यम से नियंत्रित करना भी नितान्त आवश्यक है, जिसमें बौद्ध धर्म का योगदान उल्लेखनीय सिद्ध हो सकता है।

मानव समाज के शिथिल तथा विजृम्बल आचरण को सुधारना तथा व्यवहार और आध्यात्म उभय दृष्टियों से स्वस्थ और जागरूक समाज का निर्माण करना बौद्ध धर्म का भौतिक ध्येय तथा लक्ष्य था। ब्राह्मणों द्वारा वैदिक धर्म का एकाधिकारी बनने के लिए प्रपंचों, सामाजिक रुढ़ियों, जटिल कर्मकाण्डों तथा वर्णों के जातीयकरण से उत्पन्न समस्याओं से जनता की मुक्ति के लिए भगवान बुद्ध ने बौद्ध धर्म को जन्म दिया, जिसमें प्रायः सभी धर्मों के नैतिक आचरणों का समावेश हो जाता है। दुष्कर्मों का परित्याग तथा सत्कर्मों का अनुपालन ही बौद्ध धर्म का मुख्य उद्देश्य था। धम्मपद के सिर्फ एक गाथा में ही धर्म का वास्तविक स्वरूप प्रगट हो जाता है। यथा—

सव्वपापस्स अकरणं, कुसलस्स उपसम्पदा ।

सचित्तपरियोदनं, एतं बुद्धानसासनं ॥✓

अर्थात् सभी प्रकार के पापों का न करना, कुशल कार्यों का सम्पादन करना तथा अपने चित्त को परिशुद्ध करना ही बुद्धों की शिक्षा है।

‘वैदिकी हिंसा हिंसा न भवति’, सिद्धान्त के उग्र विरोध का लोकप्रिय रूप था बौद्ध धर्म का उद्देश्य। भगवान् बुद्ध अहिंसावादी थे। अहिंसा के महत्त्व को बतलाते हुए वे कहते हैं कि संसार के स्थावर और जंगम सब प्राणियों के प्रति हिंसा का त्याग करें, न तो प्राणी का वध करें, न करायें और न करने की दूसरों को अनुमति दें। धम्मपद में भी कहा गया है कि प्राणियों की हिंसा करने से उसे ‘आर्य’ नहीं कहा जा सकता। जो सभी जीवों के प्रति अहिंसा की भावना

रखता है, वही आर्य है।¹³ बौद्ध धर्म अहिंसा के साथ-साथ परोपकार, जातीय भेदभावों एवं ऊँच-नीच की भावनाओं से परे समानता के दृष्टिकोण, संयम, तप, त्याग और प्रेम पर आधारित है, जिसके फलस्वरूप संसार के अत्यधिक लोग इसकी ओर आकर्षित हुए हैं।

बौद्ध धर्म पूर्णतः बुद्धिवादी धर्म है। बुद्ध की शिक्षा बुद्धिवाद एवं युक्तिवाद से युक्त होने के फलस्वरूप आजकल भी यह धर्म अत्यधिक लोगों को आकर्षित करता है। केसपुत्त नामक निगम के कालाम क्षत्रिय बुद्ध से पूछते हैं कि केसपुत्त में आनेवाले श्रमण-ब्राह्मण अपने मत की प्रशंसा करते हैं और दूसरे मत की निंदा, उसे छुड़वाते हैं। भन्ते आप बतायें कौन सच कहता है, कौन झूठ? कालामों का प्रश्न ऐसा है जो दुनिया के धार्मिक इतिहास में, हर युग में और हर व्यक्ति के हृदय में आता है, अतः कालामों के प्रश्न का महत्त्व सब काल में सबके लिए समान रूप से है। बुद्ध ने जो उत्तर दिया वह आज, उससे भी विश्वजनीन महत्ता लिए हुए है। वे कहते हैं, तुम्हारा संशय ठीक है। संशय योग्य स्थान में ही तुम्हें संशय हुआ है। कालामो! तुम अनुश्रव से विश्वास मत करो। मान्यशास्त्र की अनुकूलता से भी विश्वास मत करो। वक्ता के आकार के विचार से, अपने चिर-धारित विचार के होने से, वक्ता के भव्य-रूप-होने से, श्रमण हमारे गुरु हैं, इस भावना से भी तुम विश्वास मत करो। बल्कि जब तुम अपने ही आप जानो कि ये धर्म कुशल, निर्दोष, विज्ञप्रशंसित, ग्रहण कर लेने पर सुख और कल्याण के लिए होंगे, तभी इसे अपनाओ अन्यथा त्याग दो।¹⁴

वे यह नहीं कहते कि मुझ पर श्रद्धा रखकर बिना समझे मेरे धर्म को मानो। वास्तव में तर्क के आधार पर ही व्यक्ति सच्चे मार्ग को प्राप्त कर विकास कर सकता है। अन्धविश्वास में रहकर रुढ़िवाद पर चलकर, इस वैज्ञानिक युग में प्रगति के पथ पर अग्रसर होना असंभव नहीं तो दुष्कर अवश्य है। बुद्ध लोगों को आमंत्रित करते हुए कहते हैं कि विज्ञ पुरुषों द्वारा स्वयं प्रत्यक्ष करणीय धर्म को, आओ और स्वयं देख लो।¹⁵ मानव मस्तिष्क तर्क का सम्बल लेकर स्वयं को संतुष्ट करने का प्रयास करता है। बुद्ध का यह मत था कि धर्म के संबंध में किसी अन्य वस्तु या व्यक्ति को प्रमाण न माना जाए। जो धार्मिक सिद्धांत बुद्धि को उचित प्रतीत हो उसे स्वीकार किया जाए, अन्यथा उसे त्याग दिया जाए। उन्होंने प्रत्येक मनुष्य को अपना पथ-प्रदर्शक स्वयं बनने का उपदेश दिया। उन्होंने स्पष्ट कहा है “अत्तदीपा विहरथ अत्तसरणा अनयसरणा” अर्थात् भिक्षुओ! तुमलोग स्वयं ही दीपक बनो तथा दूसरे की शरण में ना जाकर अपनी ही शरण में जाओ।¹⁶ धम्मपद में भी कहा गया है “अत्ता ही अत्तनो नाथो, अत्ता ही अत्तनो गति”। अर्थात् मनुष्य अपना स्वामी आप है, अपनी गति भी वह स्वयं है।¹⁷ जहाँ अन्य मतावलम्बियों ने ईश्वर एवं गुरु को श्रेष्ठ बताकर उनकी शरण में जाना शिष्य का परम कर्तव्य

निश्चित किया है, वृहौं बुद्ध ने ईश्वर को नकारते हुए गुरु की सत्ता को भी सीमित कर, शिष्य की महत्ता का प्रतिपादन किया। संभवतः संसार के इतिहास में बुद्ध एक ऐसे विलक्षण धर्मोपदेशक हैं, जिन्होंने न केवल शास्त्रों की सत्ता को अस्वीकृत किया, बल्कि अपना (गुरु) प्रामाण्य भी न मानने के लिए शिष्यों को पूरी स्वतंत्रता दे दी, ऐसा कर बुद्ध ने मनुष्य की महत्ता एवं पवित्रता को पुनः स्थापित किया। उन्होंने तो स्पष्ट कहा है, 'तुम्हारे किञ्च आतपं, अक्खातारो तथागता' अर्थात् कार्य तो तुम्हें ही करना है, तथागत तो केवल मार्ग दिखलानेवाले हैं।⁸ आज भी समाज में ईश्वर के नाम पर गुरु के आदेशानुसार निरीह पशु-पक्षियों के साथ-साथ मानव की बलि भी दी जा रही है। कब तक एकलव्य के अंगूठे कटते रहेंगे? कितने शिष्य अहिंसक से अंगुलिमाल बनते रहेंगे? इसका स्पष्ट उत्तर है जब तक समाज में अन्धविश्वास रहेगा। प्रज्ञा द्वारा सच्चे धर्म को जान, अन्धविश्वास का परित्याग करने पर ही, समाज का कल्याण संभव है।

आज का मानव मानसिक तनावों से ग्रसित है, जिसके फलस्वरूप नाना प्रकार की व्याधियाँ उत्पन्न होती रहती हैं और लोग अपने अन्तरतम में सदा अशांति का अनुभव करते हैं। दुखों से संतप्त मानव को सुखी बनाना बौद्ध-दर्शन का मुख्य उद्देश्य है। भिक्षुओं को संबोधित करते हुए बुद्ध ने स्पष्ट कहा है—'भिक्षुओं! बहुत लोगों के हितसुख के लिए, लोक पर दया करने के लिए, जीवों पर दया करने के लिए, देव-मनुष्यों के प्रयोजन-हित सुख के लिए विचरण करो।'⁹

बुद्ध ने संसार में लोगों को दुःख से पीड़ित देखा। जन्म से मृत्युपर्यन्त लोग दुःख झेलते हैं। उनके अनुसार यह पंच-उपादान-स्कन्ध (रूप, वेदना, संज्ञा, संस्कार और विज्ञान) अर्थात् यह जीवन ही दुःखमय है।¹⁰ पंच-उपादान-स्कन्ध नाम और रूप दो भागों में विभक्त हैं। नाम के अन्तर्गत वेदना-स्कन्ध, संज्ञा-स्कन्ध, संस्कार-स्कन्ध और विज्ञान-स्कन्ध आते हैं। चारों महाभूतों (पृथ्वी, जल, वायु और अग्नि) को तथा चारों महाभूतों के कारण जो रूप उत्पन्न होता है, उसे रूप-उपादान-स्कन्ध कहते हैं।

जब अपनी आँख ठीक हो, बाहर की वस्तुएँ (रूप) सामने हो, और उनका संयोग हो, तभी उससे उत्पन्न हो सकनेवाले विज्ञान का प्रादुर्भाव होता है। इसलिए विज्ञान हेतु से उत्पन्न होता है, बिना हेतु के विज्ञान की उत्पत्ति नहीं हो सकती। इसी प्रकार सभी चक्षु-विज्ञान, श्रोत-विज्ञान, घ्राण-विज्ञान, जिह्वा-विज्ञान, काय-विज्ञान तथा मनोविज्ञान हेतु से उत्पन्न है।¹¹

उस विज्ञान में जो रूप है, वह रूप-उपादान-स्कन्ध के अन्तर्गत है। इसी प्रकार वेदना-उपादान-स्कन्ध, संज्ञा-उपादान-स्कन्ध, संस्कार-उपादान-स्कन्ध तथा विज्ञान-उपादान-स्कन्ध को भी समझना चाहिए। रूप, वेदना, संज्ञा और संस्कार के अभाव में विज्ञान की उत्पत्ति, स्थिति, विनाश, वृद्धि तथा विपुलता को प्राप्त होना असंभव है।¹²

जो उत्पन्न होनेवाला, वृद्धि को प्राप्त करनेवाला एवं विनाश होनेवाला है, वह अपना नहीं हो सकता। अतः बुद्ध ने स्पष्ट बताया कि सभी संस्कार अनित्य हैं, सभी संस्कार दुःख हैं, सभी धर्म अनात्म हैं। क्योंकि रूप, वेदना, संज्ञा, संस्कार और विज्ञान अनित्य है। जो अनित्य है, सो दुःख है। जो दुःख है, सो अनात्म है। जो अनात्म है, वह न मेरा है, वह न मैं हूँ, न वह मेरी आत्मा है।¹³ भगवान् बुद्ध एक कुशल चिकित्सक की भाँति संसार में सदियों से, दुःख से पीड़ित लोगों का निरीक्षण कर इस निष्कर्ष पर पहुँचे कि संसार अनादि है। अविद्या और तृष्णा से संचालित भटकते फिरते प्राणियों के प्रारंभ का पता नहीं चलता।¹⁴ इस प्रकार दुःख-आर्य-सत्य की व्याख्या की गयी है।

बुद्ध ने सिर्फ दुःख का प्रतिपादन ही नहीं किया बल्कि उससे मुक्ति का मार्ग भी प्रशस्त किया। उन्होंने स्पष्ट कहा—भिक्षुओं! दो ही चीजें मैं सिखाता हूँ—दुःख और दुःख से मुक्ति। कुछ लोगों द्वारा बुद्ध को निराशावादी बतलाया जाता है, जो भ्रान्तिपूर्ण है। बुद्ध का धर्म न निराशावादी है न आशावादी है और न भाग्यवादी ही है। यह एक यथार्थवादी धर्म है, जो जीवन और संसार के सत्य स्वरूप को प्रदर्शित करता है। यह स्थूल दृष्टि से वस्तुओं का निरीक्षण करता है। यह किसी व्यक्ति को मिथ्या स्वर्ग में निवास करने की झूठी शांति की बात नहीं करता और न काल्पनिक भय और पापों से किसी को भयभीत कर पीड़ित करता है। यह स्पष्ट रूप से यह बताता है कि व्यक्ति क्या है, और उसके आसपास का संसार क्या है? यह लोगों को पूर्ण स्वतंत्रता, शांति, धैर्य और प्रसन्नता का मार्ग प्रशस्त करता है।

दुःख से छुटकारा पाने के लिए बुद्ध ने दुःख का कारण तृष्णा बताया है। तृष्णा तीन प्रकार की होती है यथा—काम-तृष्णा, भव-तृष्णा, विभव-तृष्णा। इस तृष्णा-कारण का वेदना, वेदना का कारण स्पर्श, स्पर्श का कारण छ्दायतन, छ्दायतन का कारण नाम रूप, नाम रूप का कारण विज्ञान, विज्ञान का कारण संस्कार और संस्कार का कारण अविद्या है। इस प्रकार कार्य-कारण नियम (प्रतीत्य समुत्पाद) के आधार पर तृष्णा रूपी फल की जड़ अविद्या ही है, जिसका विनाश करने पर ही वास्तविक सुख (निर्वाण) की प्राप्ति संभव है।

तीसरा आर्य सत्य दुःख-निरोध, बुद्ध के समस्त दर्शन का केन्द्र-बिन्दु है। यह भी कार्य-कारण नियम से युक्त है। उनके अनुसार तृष्णा के संपूर्ण निरोध से उपादान निरुद्ध हो जाता है। उपादान निरुद्ध हुआ तो भव निरुद्ध। भव निरुद्ध हुआ तो जाति (जन्म) निरुद्ध। जन्म निरुद्ध हुआ तो बुढ़ा होना, मरना, शोक करना, रोना-पीटना, पीड़ित होना, चिंतित होना, परेशान होना यह सब निरुद्ध हो जाते हैं।¹⁵ यही शांति है, यह श्रेष्ठता है, यह जो सभी संस्कारों का शमन, सभी चित्तमलों का त्याग, तृष्णा का क्षय, विराग-स्वरूप, निरोध स्वरूप निर्वाण है।¹⁶

चतुर्थ आर्य-सत्य दुःख-निरोध की ओर ले जानेवाला मार्ग है। यह आठ श्रेष्ठ अंगों से युक्त होने के कारण आर्य-अष्टांगिक मार्ग तथा मध्यम मार्ग के नाम से भी विख्यात है। इनमें प्रायः कुशल कर्मों का समावेश हो जाता है, जिनका अनुकरण कर अपने कर्मों के अनुसार मनुष्य दुःख से मुक्त हो सकता है। धम्मपद में इसकी विशेषता बतलाते हुए बुद्ध कहते हैं कि दर्शन की विशुद्धि अर्थात् निर्मल ज्ञान की प्राप्ति के लिए यही एक मार्ग है, दूसरा कोई नहीं, इसी पर तुम आरुढ़ होओ, यही मार को मूर्छित करनेवाला है। इस मार्ग पर आरुढ़ हो तुम दुःखों का अन्त कर दोगे। शल्य-समान दुःख निवारण स्वरूप निर्वाण को जान मैंने इसका उपदेश दिया है।”

बुद्ध की शिक्षा सिर्फ विहारों में निवास करनेवाले भिक्षुओं के लिए ही नहीं, परिवार के साथ घर में रहनेवाले साधारण नर-नारी के लिए भी उपयोगी है। चार आर्य-सत्य, जो जीवन के लिए बुद्ध मार्ग (ज्ञान मार्ग) है, सभी के लिए भेद-भाव रहित है। बुद्ध के कर्मवादी धर्म में ईश्वर के अस्तित्व की कतई कोई गुंजाइश नहीं है। बौद्ध धर्म किसी पंडे-पुरोहित, पादरी, मुल्ला, देवता एवं ईश्वर की सहायता के बिना भी कल्याण का संपादन, केवल अपनी शक्ति पर निर्भर होना, बतलाता है। अपने कुशल कार्यों द्वारा ही व्यक्ति स्वयं प्रकाश-पुंज बन, समस्त दुःखों का अन्त करते हुए, निर्भय हो स्वतः स्वतंत्र रूप से विचरण कर सकता है।

समाज में सामाजिक विषमता, वर्णभेद, जात-पात, अस्पृश्यता का व्यवहार आज भी असह्य रूप में विद्यमान है। बुद्ध ने समाज में विद्यमान असमानताओं को देख कहा कि सब मनुष्य समान हैं, न कोई श्रेष्ठ है और न कोई नीच, अपने कर्मों के अनुसार ही मनुष्य को लघुता और गुरुता प्राप्त होती है। धर्म में सबका समान अधिकार है। जो चाहे अपनी इच्छानुसार इसे ग्रहण कर सकता है। उन्होंने कहा है कि “जिस प्रकार अनेक नदियाँ (जैसे गंगा, यमुना, अचिरवती, सरयु, मही इत्यादि) महासमुद्र में पड़कर अपने पूर्व के नाम गोत्र को छोड़ देती हैं और वे सब महासमुद्र कहलाती हैं, इसी प्रकार बौद्धसंघ में प्रवेश करने पर लोग अपनी जाति के अस्तित्व को खो देते हैं।”¹⁸ इस प्रकार उन्होंने प्रजातंत्रवाद के मूल सिद्धांत जाति-विहीन समाज का प्रतिपादन किया।

आजकल मानव के समान अधिकार की चर्चा प्रायः सर्वत्र सुनाई देती है, परन्तु समान अधिकार की स्थापना सर्वप्रथम बुद्ध ने ही की थी। उन्होंने अपने उपदेश को केवल सिद्धांत रूप में ही नहीं रखा, बल्कि उसे व्यवहार रूप में भी परिणत किया। उन्होंने भट्टीय, अनुरुद्ध, आनन्द, भृगु, किम्बिल, देवदत्त आदि छह शाक्य कुमारों को छोड़ नीच जाति में उत्पन्न उपासि

नापित को पहले प्रव्रजित किया।¹⁹ बुद्ध ने ऐसा इसलिए किया कि शाक्यों को शाक्य होने का जो अभिमान था वह मर्दित हो जाए। इस प्रकार उपालि शाक्य राजकुमारों से वरीय हो गए। अब संघ नियमानुसार शाक्य कुल से प्रव्रजित इन भिक्षुओं को उपालि का अभिवादन एवं प्रत्युत्थान करना था। वैशाली गणराज्य के प्रमुख लिच्छिवियों का निमंत्रण ठुकरा कर समाज में हेय दृष्टि से देखे जानेवाली वैशाली की वेश्या अम्बपाली के यहाँ भोजन स्वीकार कर उन्होंने अम्बपाली को भी सम्मानित किया।

आजकल समाज में धर्म के नाम पर दंगा फसाद आम बात हो गयी है। धर्म के नाम पर देश एवं प्रदेश के पुनर्विभाजन का प्रश्न पुनः मुँह बाये हमारे समक्ष खड़ा है। भारत जैसे सभ्य, सुशिक्षित एवं धर्म-सहिष्णु देश में एक धर्म के लोग दूसरे धर्मावलम्बी की हत्या करने, एक दूसरे के पूजा-स्थल को नष्ट करने में लगे हैं, इससे बढ़कर लज्जा की बात और क्या हो सकती है। कुछ समय पहले घटी पंजाब, महाराष्ट्र, उत्तर प्रदेश एवं आन्ध्र प्रदेश की घटनाएँ जघन्य एवं निन्दनीय हैं। प्रायः ऐसी घटनाएँ साम्प्रदायिकता की भावना के फलस्वरूप ही घटित होती है। बुद्ध साम्प्रदायिकता के विरोधी थे। उन्होंने असहिष्णुता का जबरदस्त विरोध किया। उनके अनुसार जो दूसरे के धर्म को स्थान नहीं देता, वह मूर्ख, पशु और प्रज्ञाहीन होता है।²⁰

अपनी दृष्टि के फेर में पड़कर दूसरे को नीच देखने को ग्रन्थि (बंधन) कहा गया है।²¹ अतः सभी सम्प्रदायों के साथ उदार भावना रखनी चाहिए तथा किसी की निन्दा नहीं करनी चाहिए। निन्दा से क्रुद्ध होना एवं प्रसन्नता से प्रफुल्लित होना एक सामान्य बात है। किन्तु इसका परिणाम प्रायः अच्छा नहीं होता। सुप्रिय परिव्राजक द्वारा बुद्ध, धर्म और संघ की निन्दा तथा उसके शिष्य ब्रह्मदत्त द्वारा प्रशंसा किए जाने पर बुद्ध कहते हैं कि—“भिक्षुओं! यदि कोई बुद्ध, धर्म और संघ की निन्दा करे, तब तुम लोगों को उससे न आघात, न बैर, न असंतोष और न ही चित्त में कोप होना चाहिए, क्योंकि उससे कुपित या खिन्न होने पर तुम्हारी ही हानि होगी। इसी प्रकाश प्रशंसा से आनन्दित होने पर भी हानि होगी।²² बुद्ध के इस कथन से उनकी महान सहनशीलता प्रदर्शित होती है। ऐसे बहुत कम लोग हैं, जो निन्दा से क्रोधित एवं प्रशंसा से प्रफुल्लित न होते हों, लेकिन बुद्ध दोनों में समभाव रखने को कहते हैं। उन्होंने यह ठीक ही कहा है कि ऐसा कोई व्यक्ति न था, न होगा और न अभी वर्तमान है, जिसकी निन्दा या प्रशंसा न हुई हो।²³

उपालि-सुत्त तथा सीह-सुत्त बुद्ध की महान धार्मिक सहिष्णुता का उदाहरण है। उपालि गृहस्थ तथा सेनापति सिंह दोनों पहले महावीर के अनुयायी थे। दोनों बुद्ध का उपदेश सुनकर बुद्धधर्म ग्रहण कर लिये। बुद्ध ने उन दोनों को कहा कि गृहपति दीर्घकाल से तुम्हारा कुल निर्ग्रन्थों

के लिए प्याउ की तरह रहा है। निर्गन्धों के आने पर उन्हें पिण्ड नहीं देना चाहिए, यह मत सोचना अर्थात् उन्हें दान आदि देते रहना।²⁴ इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि बुद्ध दूसरे धार्मिक सम्प्रदायों का आदर करते थे तथा उन्हें भी दान आदि करने को कहते थे। हमें यह स्मरण रखना चाहिए कि विभिन्न धर्म अथवा सम्प्रदाय एक ही केन्द्र-विन्दु (नैतिक आचरण) पर पहुँचने के विभिन्न मार्ग हैं। विभिन्न मार्गों से कोई अन्तर नहीं पड़ता, क्योंकि उनके द्वारा हम एक ही गन्तव्य पर पहुँचते हैं। बौद्ध सम्राट अशोक भी श्रमण-ब्राह्मण, जैन, आजीविक आदि सम्प्रदायों की विविध प्रकार से पूजा करता तथा दान दिया करता था।²⁵ उसकी प्रबल इच्छा थी की सभी सम्प्रदाय के लोग सर्वत्र निवास करें। उसके अनुसार जो अपने सम्प्रदाय की प्रशंसा तथा दूसरे सम्प्रदाय की निन्दा करता है, वह अपने सम्प्रदाय को काफी नुकसान पहुँचाता है।²⁶

संग्रह की प्रवृत्ति अनेक अपराधों को जन्म देती है। आज देश में कालबाजारी, तस्करी, जमाखोरी और घोटाला जैसे भ्रष्टाचार के मूल में यही अनैतिक संचय की प्रवृत्ति ही है। संग्रह करने से वस्तु का अभाव हो जाता है और अन्य लोग उससे लाभान्वित नहीं हो पाते हैं। अतः अल्पसंग्रह करना श्रेष्ठ है ताकि दूसरे लोगों को भी उसका लाभ मिल सके। इसे दृष्टिगत कर बुद्ध गृहस्थ के कर्तव्यों के संदर्भ में सिंगल गृहपति को बताते हैं कि समृद्ध गृहस्थ अपनी अर्जित सम्पत्ति को चार भागों में विभक्त करें। इसके एक भाग का स्वयं उपयोग करें, दो भागों को काम में लाए अर्थात् दो हिस्सों से व्यापार आदि करें तथा शेष चौथे भाग को आपातकाल के लिए संचित करें।²⁷ अल्प-संचय करनेवालों की प्रशंसा करते हुए बुद्ध ने कहा है, देवों में श्रेष्ठ ब्रह्मा अपरिग्रही हैं और बौद्ध-भिक्षु भी अपरिग्रही है, अतः दोनों में समानता है। इस प्रकार यह संभव है कि अपरिग्रही भिक्षु काया छोड़ मरने के बाद ब्रह्मलोक में अपरिग्रही-ब्रह्मा के साथ मिल सके।²⁸ बौद्ध सम्राट अशोक ने अल्प-संचय को समाज के लिए आवश्यक समझा, उन्होंने लोगों के अल्पव्यय-एवं-अल्पसंग्रह की नीति अपनाने की राय दी।²⁹

बुद्ध संभवतः समाज में आर्थिक समानता लाने के उद्देश्य से वर्णव्यवस्था तथा जातीय ऊँच-नीच के भाव को हटाना चाहते थे। संघ संचालन हेतु उन्होंने आर्थिक साम्यवाद का प्रज्ञापन किया। भिक्षु-भिक्षुणियों के लिए वैसे ही नियम बनाए, जिनके अनुसार तीन चीवर, उस्तुरा, सुई, धमगा, भिक्षापात्र आदि चीजों को छोड़कर शेष सारी संपत्ति संघ की मानी जाती थी। इस प्रकार वे मानव मात्र के लिए आर्थिक समानता के प्रचारक थे। किन्तु उन्होंने इसे अपने गृहस्थ शिष्यों के लिए अव्यावहारिक समझकर इस पर बल नहीं दिया।

बुद्ध की आर्थिक नीति आधुनिक युग में काफी महत्त्व रखती है। समाज में संग्रह की प्रवृत्ति के फलस्वरूप आर्थिक विषमता बढ़ती है, जिससे आम जनता का जीवन कष्टमय हो जाता

है। इसे ध्यान रखकर कुछ वर्षों से अनेक नेता इसके विरुद्ध आवाज उठाने लगे हैं। सर्वप्रथम आज से पच्चीस वर्ष पूर्व महाराष्ट्र विधानसभा में विधायिका श्रीमती मृणाल गोरे ने सभी निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों के लिए अपनी संपत्ति का हिसाब देना अनिवार्य बनाने के लिए एक गैरसरकारी विधेयक रखा था। परन्तु ऐसा सुन्दर विधेयक बहुमत के अभाव में अस्वीकृत हो गया। उसी प्रकार राष्ट्रपति के चुनाव के समय शम्भुनाथ मिश्र, संसद सदस्य ने मंत्रियों की जायदाद का हिसाब माँगने की आवाज उठायी थी, किन्तु उसका भी कुछ प्रभाव नहीं पड़ा। जापान के प्रधानमंत्री तकेओ मिकी ने तो प्रधानमंत्री बनने के साथ ही अपनी संपत्ति का पूरा हिसाब देशवासियों के सामने रख दिया। परन्तु आजतक भारत में व्यय एवं संग्रह का हिसाब रखने की व्यवस्था न हो सकी और दिन प्रतिदिन घोटाले होते रहे। समाज में निर्धन एवं धनी लोगों के बीच की खाई बढ़ती गई। जिस समाज में शोषक और शोषित वर्ग होंगे उस समाज में असमानता एवं विषमता फैलेगी ही। सामाजिक विषमता, ऊँच-नीच की भावना लाना नितान्त आवश्यक है।

आज बढ़ते हुए प्रदूषण से समस्त विश्व चिन्तित है। प्रदूषण के फलस्वरूप मानव विध्वंस के कगार पर खड़ा है। प्रदूषण के कारण अनेक प्राणि और वनस्पतियाँ विलुप्त हो गयी हैं और कुछ समाप्त होने की हालत में आ गयी हैं। मॉरीशस में कबूतर जाति का 'टोडो' पक्षी अन्धाधुंध शिकार के कारण समाप्त हो गया है, जिसके फलस्वरूप "कालबेरिया मेजर" नामक वृक्ष समाप्त हो रहे हैं। कालबेरिया मेजर वृक्ष के बीजों को कड़ा छिलका टोडो के पेट में पचकर मूलायम होते थे और बीज मल के साथ बाहर आकर आसानी से उग जाते थे। अब टोडो के समाप्त हो जाने से "कालबेरिया मेजर" के नए वृक्ष उगने बंद हो गए हैं। पर्यावरण को संतुलित रखने के लिए वनस्पति के साथ-साथ जीवों का उचित मात्रा में रहना भी आवश्यक है। बुद्ध ने जीवों की रक्षा हेतु शील के साथ-साथ दस शिक्षापद तथा पंचशील के सिद्धांतों में प्रथम स्थान 'पाणातिपाता बेरमणि' को दिया है। शील का वर्णन करते हुए उन्होंने कहा है कि भिक्षुगण बीजों और जीवों का नाश करने को छोड़, बीजों और जीवों के नाश करने से विरत रहता है, जिसके फलस्वरूप अनाड़ी लोग भी उनकी प्रशंसा करते हैं।³⁰

बुद्ध के अनुसार वगीचे और उपवन लगानेवाले भी उनकी प्रशंसा करते रहते हैं।³¹ वायु प्रदूषण दूर करने के लिए बोधि वृक्ष (पीपल) काफी सहायक सिद्ध हुए हैं। बौद्ध-धर्मानुयायियों द्वारा बोधि-वृक्ष को रोपने का उद्देश्य बुद्ध ज्ञान के साथ-साथ प्रदूषण से बचाव भी रहा है। यज्ञ में जीवों की बलि तो दी जाती थी, वृक्षों को काटकर उनके श्रूप बनवाये जाते थे तथा हवन में लकड़ियाँ जलाई जाती थीं, जिससे वनस्पतियों का विनाश हो रहा था। संभवतः प्रदूषण को ध्यान में रखकर ही बुद्ध यज्ञ का विरोध करते थे।

बुद्ध पृथ्वी एवं जल प्रदूषण से भी परिचित थे तथा उनकी सुरक्षा किया करते थे । यदि कोई व्यक्ति उन्हें दोषपूर्ण, हानिकर, भोजन प्रदान करता था, जिसे बुद्ध के अतिरिक्त दूसरे लोग न पचा सकते थे, वैसे भोजन को वे या तो जीव रहित जल में डलवा देते थे या तृण रहित भूमि में गड़वा देते थे ।³²

ध्वनि प्रदूषण भी समाज के लिए अत्यन्त हानिकर है । बुद्ध शोरगुल से दूर एकान्त में शान्ति से जीवन व्यतीत करना पसन्द करते थे तथा भिक्षुओं को भी एकान्तिक जीवन व्यतीत करना श्रेष्ठकर बताते थे । वे जंगल में, वृक्ष की जड़, पर्वत की कन्दरा तथा श्मशान जैसे सुनसान स्थान पर निवास करना पसंद करते थे । श्रद्धालु उपासकों द्वारा बनवाये गये बौद्ध विहार एवं आराम भी प्रायः न तो आबादी के समीप होते थे और न अत्यधिक दूर । शहर के समीप रहने पर कोलाहल से बाधा पहुँचती तथा शहर से ज्यादा दूर रहने पर लोग धर्मोपदेश सुनने नहीं जा पाते । दूसरे धर्मानुयायी भी यह जानते थे कि बुद्ध शोर गुल पसन्द नहीं करते हैं । एक बार श्रावस्ती में एकशालक, मल्लिका के आराम तिन्दुकाचीर में पौडपाद परिव्राजक, वृहत् परिव्राजक परिषद् के साथ बैठा कथा संलाप कर रहा था । उसके परिषद् में शोर मचा था । उसी समय उसकी नजर बुद्ध पर पड़ी, जो उसी विहार की ओर आ रहे थे । उसने दूर से ही भगवान को आते देखकर अपनी परिषद् से कहा— आप सब निःशब्द हों, शब्द मत करें, श्रमण गौतम आ रहे हैं । वह आयुष्मान् निःशब्द प्रेमी, अल्पशब्द प्रशंसक हैं । परिषद् को निःशब्द देख, संभव है इधर आवें ।³³ बुद्ध का भिक्षु परिषद् शान्त रहता था । भिक्षुओं के बड़े संघ से थूकने, खौंसने तक का या किसी दूसरे प्रकार का शब्द नहीं होता था ।³⁴

आज परमाणु हथियारों के आविष्कार होने पर युद्ध कितना विध्वंसकारी होगा, इसकी कल्पना ही लोगों को भयभीत कर देती है । प्रसिद्ध वैज्ञानिक अल्बर्ट आइन्सटाइन ने तृतीय विश्वयुद्ध के सम्बन्ध में पूछा गया कि तीसरा विश्वयुद्ध होगा तो क्या होगा ? तब-उन्होंने उत्तर दिया था कि यह तो मैं नहीं जानता, परन्तु चौथा विश्वयुद्ध रोड़े, डंडे और पत्थरों से लड़ा जाएगा । युद्ध की विभीषिका आइन्सटाइन के इस कथन से स्पष्ट हो जाती है ।

विश्वयुद्ध को रोकने के लिए आज कई राष्ट्र एवं सामाजिक संस्थाएं प्रयत्नशील हैं । जापान के परम पूज्य फूजी गुरुजी द्वारा भारत तथा विश्व के दूसरे देशों में शान्ति-स्तूप की स्थापना का उद्देश्य विश्व शान्ति ही है । विश्व शान्ति के लिए महाबोधि सभा और विश्व बौद्ध सम्मेलन (वर्ल्ड फेलोशिप ऑफ बुद्धिस्ट्स) जैसे अन्तराष्ट्रीय संगठनों के जन्मदाता श्रीलंका का प्रयास भी सराहणीय है, जिसने इनके माध्यम से अनेक धर्मदूतों को बाहर भेजा । तृतीय विश्व के सभी देश परमाणु बमों के प्रयोग पर प्रतिबन्ध लगाने के लिए कृतसंकल्प हैं । विश्व शांति के लिए भगवान बुद्ध

द्वारा उपदिष्ट करुणा, मैत्री, मुदिता और उपेक्षा का उपदेश बहुत ही महत्त्वपूर्ण है। ब्रह्म-विहार का यह उपदेश उन्होंने भिक्षुओं एवं गृहस्थों दोनों के लिए समान रूप से दिया। इतिहास से ज्ञात होता है कि भारत और चीन को छोड़कर एशिया के प्रायः अन्य सभी राष्ट्र के लोग मूलतः हिंसा के प्रिय थे। बाद में बौद्धधर्म के शान्तिवादी उपदेशों के प्रभाव स्वरूप ही उनमें शान्तिप्रियता आयी। इस प्रकार बौद्ध-धर्म और शान्ति का सम्बन्ध आकस्मिक न होकर अनिवार्य है। विश्व-शान्ति की स्थापना में बौद्ध धर्म अतीत में एक योगदान देनेवाला साधन रहा है, इस समय है और आगे भी रहेगा।³⁵

यह एक ऐतिहासिक तथ्य है कि हम संसार के संपर्क में भगवान बुद्ध के उपदेशों के माध्यम से आये। इसके द्वारा हम जिस किसी से मिले, उसका शोषण न कर अपने संपर्क से उसे कृतार्थ किये। स्थविर महेन्द्र, धर्मप्रचारार्थ लंका जाने पर, राजा देवानंपियतिसस को बताते हैं कि हम धर्मराज के श्रावक आपके ऊपर अनुग्रह करने के लिए ही भारत से यहाँ आये हैं।³⁶ महेन्द्र के इन शब्दों से उस सारी भावना का प्रतिनिधित्व होता है, जिससे प्रभावित होकर हजारों भिक्षु और उपदेशक पैदल यात्रा कर विदेश गये थे। इन स्मृतियों की पृष्ठभूमि को लेकर भारत आज भी विदेशों से राजनैतिक एवं सांस्कृतिक सम्बन्ध स्थापित कर सकता है तथा एशिया के देशों में अपने पूर्व सम्बन्धों को फिर से जीवन्त कर मैत्री का सम्बन्ध दृढ़तर कर सकता है।

निष्कर्ष के रूप में हम कह सकते हैं कि बौद्ध धर्म एक ऐसा धर्म है, जिसमें अन्धविश्वास एवं पाखण्डवाद का कोई स्थान नहीं है। अपनी बुद्धि, विवेक और कर्म के अनुसार व्यक्ति स्वयं दुःख से मुक्त हो, समाज को सुखी-संपन्न बना सकता है। समाज में व्याप्त जातीयता, आर्थिक विषमता, जमाखोरी, रुढ़िवादिता, धार्मिक उन्माद तथा हिंसा आदि बुराइयों को दूर करने में बुद्ध के उपदेश काफी सहायक सिद्ध हो सकती हैं। जीवों एवं वनस्पतियों को सुरक्षा प्रदान कर, उनके बीच सन्तुलन बनाये रखकर, पर्यावरण की सुरक्षा की जा सकती है। बौद्ध धर्म के अहिंसा, भाईचारे एवं ब्रह्मविहार के मार्ग को अपना कर, युद्ध की विभीषिका समाप्त कर, विश्वशान्ति कायम की जा सकती है तथा विदेशों से भी हमारे सम्बन्ध मधुर बन सकते हैं। बुद्ध के वचनों का अनुपालन करने से ही, उनकी निम्नलिखित अभिलाषा पूरी हो सकती है।

“ये केचि पाणभूतत्थि, तसा वा थावरा अनवसेसा ।
 दीया वा ये महन्ता वा, मज्झिमा रक्काणुकथूला ॥
 दिट्ठा वा मेव अदिट्ठा, ये च दूरे वसन्ति अविदूरे ।
 भूता वा सम्भवेसी वा, सब्बे सत्ता भवन्तु सुखितत्ता ॥

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बौद्ध धर्म और भारतीय वर्ण-व्यवस्था

कपिलदेव प्रसाद सिंह

पालि विभाग, नालन्दा कॉलेज

भारतीय समाज में वर्ण-व्यवस्था प्राचीन काल से चली आ रही है। ऋग्वैदिक काल के प्रथम चरण में आर्य और दास अथवा अनार्य नामक दो वर्ग या वर्ण थे। इन दोनों वर्गों का विभाजन आचारमूलक और कर्ममूलक था। दोनों के भिन्न-भिन्न कर्म थे। सत्कार्य करनेवाले आर्य थे और दुष्कर्म करनेवाले दास अथवा अनार्य। आर्य और दास का भेद आचारपरक था और विचारपरक भी। समाज की गति इन्हीं दोनों वर्णों के आधार पर चल रही थी। इसी बीच आर्य का समाज अपने व्यवसाय और कार्य पद्धति के कारण अपने में वर्गीकृत हुआ। फलस्वरूप ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय और वैश्य नामक तीन वर्णों का उदय हुआ। ऋग्वेद के पुरुष सूक्त जैसी उत्तरकालीन रचनाओं में ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय, वैश्य और शूद्र नामक चार वर्णों का सर्वप्रथम उल्लेख हुआ है जो क्रमशः विराट पुरुष के मुख, बाहु, जांघ और पैर से उत्पन्न थे।

भगवद्गीता में भी वर्ण-व्यवस्था के दैवी सिद्धान्त के रूप में उत्पत्ति का वर्णन मिलता है। इसमें भगवान् श्री कृष्ण का कथन है कि चारों वर्णों की सृष्टि मैंने गुण और कर्म के आधार पर की है तथा मैं ही उनका कर्त्ता और विनाशक हूँ। वर्ण-व्यवस्था की उत्पत्ति के मूल में गुणों की भी अभिव्यक्ति मानी गयी है। मनुष्य अपने गुणों से महान होता है, न कि अपने वंश अथवा परिवार से; उसके अन्तः और बाह्य गुण ही उसको श्रेष्ठ पद की प्राप्ति कराते हैं। ये गुण कई प्रकार के होते हैं। प्राकृतितः तीन प्रकार के गुण थे—सत्व, रज और तम। सत्वगुण अत्यन्त निर्मल, स्वच्छ, दोषरहित, ज्ञान-प्रदाता और सांसारिकता से विमुक्त करनेवाला होता है। उससे व्यक्ति को वास्तविक सुख और ज्ञान का आभास मिलता है। अपनी सात्विकता के कारण यह गुण श्रेष्ठतम माना गया है। इस गुण के कारण अपनी उच्च स्थिति बना लेता है तथा अन्य लोगों से पूर्णतः अलग दर्शित होता है। रजोगुण से प्रेरित होकर मनुष्य अनुरक्त होता हुआ अपने कर्मों को सम्पन्न करता है तथा संसार सागर का संतरण करता है। सत्वगुण की तुलना में रजो गुण भिन्न है क्योंकि यह मनुष्य की भौतिक एवं सांसारिक बंधन से आबद्ध करता है। तमोगुण से अज्ञान की सृष्टि होती है। जब अज्ञान का प्रभाव होता है तब भ्रम, आलस्य, प्रमाद, निद्रा आदि का उदय होता है और मनुष्य इससे ग्रस्त हो जाता है। अतः सत्व गुण सुख का रजस् गुण कर्म का और तमस् गुण अज्ञान का द्योतक माना गया है। इन्हीं गुणों से मनुष्य अपना विकास करता है। सभी वर्णों के अलग-

अलग गुण निर्देशित किये हैं, जिन्हें ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय, वैश्य और शूद्र गृहीत करते थे। जिसमें सत्वगुण था वह ब्राह्मण जिसमें रजोगुण था वह क्षत्रिय, जिसमें रजस् और तमस् दोनों गुणों का समिश्रण था वह वैश्य तथा जिसमें तमोगुण था वह शूद्र माना गया।

ऋग्वैदिक युग में चारों वर्णों के मध्य मित्रता एवं बंधुता थी। कर्म और कर्तव्य के आधार पर सामाजिक व्यवस्था का संयोजन हो रहा था। जन्म का महत्त्व समाज में नहीं था। वर्गीकरण में ऊँच-नीच की भावना का कोई प्रभाव नहीं था। व्यवसायों को अपनाने की स्वतंत्रता थी। किसी प्रकार का कोई बंधन किसी पर नहीं था। इन तथ्यों से यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि समाज में स्वतंत्र रूप से कर्म को अपनाने की छूट थी।

ऋग्वेद के नवम् मण्डल के 112वें सूक्त में से ज्ञात होता है कि एक ही परिवार के भिन्न-भिन्न सदस्य विभिन्न प्रकार की पेशाएँ अपनाते थे—

“कारुरहं ततो भिषगुपलप्रक्षिणी नना ।”

अर्थात् “मैं गायक (स्तुतिकर्ता) हूँ, मेरे पिता वैद्य हैं और मेरी माता पत्थरों से अन्न दलने का काम करती है। इस प्रकार वर्ण-व्यवस्था आर्यों के साथ ही नहीं आयी, जीवन की आवश्यकताओं (श्रम-विभाजन) पर आश्रित हुई।”

अतएव कर्म के अनुसार ही वर्णों का विभाजन हुआ था। कालान्तर में यह भेद कर्मना न रहकर जन्मना हो गया। आज के परिप्रेक्ष्य में इस व्यवस्था का मूल्यांकन करने पर प्रतीत हुआ है कि चारों वर्ण अपने-अपने निर्धारित कर्म से दूर हट गये हैं क्योंकि जनतांत्रिक सरकार की स्थापना के फलस्वरूप समाज के प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को अपना व्यवसाय चुनने की स्वतंत्रता है। ऐसी परिस्थिति में भारतीय वर्ण-व्यवस्था का समाज शास्त्रीय एवं मनोवैज्ञानिक मूल्यांकन करने पर भान होता है कि व्यक्ति भेद के कारण किसी न किसी ग्रन्थि से ग्रस्त है।

ऋग्वेद के उत्तरकालीन युग में वर्ण-भेद सम्बन्धी मनुष्य की धारणाएँ रूढ़ होती गयीं और पेशे वंशानुगत हो गये। ब्राह्मण युग आते-आते मनुष्य के सामाजिक जीवन में वर्ण भेद सम्बन्धी धारणाओं की जड़ें इतनी गहराई तक प्रविष्ट हो गयीं कि देवगण भी चतुर्वर्ण में विभाजित माने जाने लगे। बुद्धकाल में वर्णों का भेद-भाव अपनी चरम सीमा पर पहुँच गया। ऊँच-नीच की भावना सब में घर कर की गयी थी। वर्णों के बीच श्रेष्ठता के लिए संघर्ष प्रारम्भ हो चुका था। कुछ खास वर्ण के लोग एक दूसरे से बढ़कर अपनी श्रेष्ठता सिद्ध करना चाहते थे। ऐसे ही समय में भारत भूमि में एक महान धर्म-चक्रप्रवर्तक

तथा समाज सुधारक के रूप में भगवान बुद्ध का जन्म हुआ। उन्होंने तत्कालीन समाज में नवीन धार्मिक एवं सामाजिक चेतना को जन्म दिया और वर्ण से सम्बद्ध परम्परागत धारणाओं को नितान्त निःसार एवं निरर्थक घोषित किया। भगवान् बुद्ध ने बतलाया कि मानवमात्र समान हैं, कोई उच्चवर्ण में जन्म लेने से ही महान नहीं होता, वरन् अपने सत्कर्मों द्वारा ही उसकी महत्ता की पुष्टि होती है।

हिन्दू धर्म में वर्ण-व्यवस्था को ईश्वरीय माना गया है : सभी वर्णों के कर्म को भी ईश्वरीय माना गया है। जब भगवान् गौतम का इस संसार में प्रादुर्भाव हुआ। तब रुढ़िगत परम्परा और ऊँच-नीच की भावना की उन्होंने कड़ी भर्त्सना की। उन्होंने जन्म से स्वीकार की जानेवाली श्रेष्ठता को अस्वीकार कर दिया तथापि माँ तथा पिता की सात पीढ़ियों की शुद्धता की बात कही। यह कोई आश्चर्य की बात नहीं कि बुद्ध ने कुल की प्रतिष्ठा स्वीकार की, क्योंकि बुद्ध स्वयं प्रतिष्ठित वंश में जन्मे थे। अतः उनके द्वारा कुल की शुद्धता और श्रेष्ठता को स्वीकार किया जाना कोई अचरज की बात नहीं। उनका संघ एक समुद्र था जहाँ जाकर गोत्र जाति के लोग उसी तरह समाहित हो जाते थे जिस तरह से नदियाँ समुद्र में मिलने पर अपना नाम खो देती हैं। उन्होंने बार-बार यही कहा—सबसे महत्त्वपूर्ण बात श्रेष्ठता के लिए विद्या और आचरण की सम्पन्नता है न कि बड़ी जाति में जन्म लेना और इस तरह उन्होंने कर्म को ही प्रधानता दी।

जीववैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण : आधुनिक जीववैज्ञानिकों और वनस्पतिशास्त्रियों की खोजों से ज्ञात होता है कि सभी पादप और जन्तुओं की संरचना में कुछ मूलभूत ऊतकों हैं। इससे सभी प्राणवान जीवों की एकता और समानता सिद्ध होती है। मनुष्य एक स्पेसीज है। अतएव वर्णभेद का कोई प्रश्न नहीं रह जाता है। बुद्ध ने “वासेट्ठसुत्त” में इसे स्पष्ट किया है। उन्होंने कहा है कि प्राणियों में, जैसे तृण, वृक्ष, कीट, पतंग, चौपये, जलचर, चभ्रचर पक्षियों आदि में लिङ्ग विद्यमान है परन्तु इस प्रकार का जाति लिङ्ग मनुष्यों में अलग-अलग नहीं है। अतः जन्म से न ब्राह्मण होता है न जन्म से अ-ब्राह्मण। कर्म से ब्राह्मण होता है और कर्म से ही अ-ब्राह्मण। इसकी पुष्टि इस बात से होती है—जो गोरक्षा से जीविका करता है वह कृषक है; जो शिल्प से जीविका करता है, वह शिल्पी है; जो व्यापार से जीविका करता है, वह वैश्य है आदि।

प्राता और योनि से उत्पन्न होने के कारण कोई ब्राह्मण नहीं होता, वरन् ब्राह्मण वह है जो अपरग्रही है। कमल के पत्ते पर जल और आरे के नोकर पर सरसों की भाँति जो भोगों में लिप्त नहीं होता वह तप, ब्रह्मचर्य, संयम और दम से युक्त है।

उपर्युक्त तथ्यों से यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि किसी भी वर्ण का व्यक्ति पुण्य कर्मों द्वारा ब्राह्मण कहा जा सकता है ।

“मधुरसुत” में इस विन्दु को स्पष्ट किया गया है ।

वर्णव्यवस्था को ईश्वरीय मानना असंगत प्रतीत होता है—

समाजशास्त्रीय दृष्टिकोण : हिन्दू-धर्म में समाज को गतिहीन मानते हुए इसे चार भागों में विभाजित कर दिया गया है । चारों वर्णों के कर्तव्य निश्चित हैं ।

बौद्ध-धर्म में गतिशील और विकासशील समाज की परिकल्पना है । बुद्ध की दृष्टि में समाज का चार भागों में विभाजन पूर्ण और मौलिक नहीं है । बुद्ध ने बतलाया है कि सीमावर्ती देशों में यवनों और कम्बोजों जैसे मानव समूहों में केवल दो ही वर्ण हैं, यथा-आर्य और दास । इन्हीं दो वर्णों की भिन्नता भी अपरिवर्तनीय नहीं है । आर्य दास हो सकता है और दास आर्य हो सकता है । (अस्सलायन सुत्त)

दीर्घ-निकाय के “अगञ्जसुत्त” में मनुष्य और उसके समाज के विकास सम्बन्धी सिद्धान्त का वर्ण है । जन्म की अपेक्षा कर्म को ही प्रधान माना गया है । बुद्ध ने ईश्वरीय वर्ण-व्यवस्था का खण्डन किया है । अतः प्रत्येक वर्ण का स्वधर्म भी स्वतः खण्डित हो जाता है । इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि बुद्ध ने समाज का विकासवादी सिद्धान्त प्रस्तुत किया है । चौथे वर्ण के कर्म के विषय में हिन्दू-धर्म की व्यवस्था है कि वह परिचर्या का कार्य करेगा । बुद्ध ने इस परम्परागत विभाजन का विरोध करते हुए कहा है कि किसी की सेवा लेना जन्म पर निर्भर नहीं होता । यह सेवा लेनेवाले की आर्थिक स्थिति पर निर्भर है । “मधुरसुत्त” में कहा गया है कि यदि शुद्र भी धनवान है तो वह ब्राह्मण को भी परिचारक रख सकता है । यदि ऐसा है तो चारों वर्ण समान हैं ।

धार्मिक दृष्टिकोण : बुद्ध ने ब्राह्मण धर्म की परम्परा को साफ तौर पर तोड़ दिया है । इन्होंने निर्वाण का दरवाजा सभी वर्णों के लिए खोल दिया है । इतना ही नहीं इनका विचार है कि वर्ण-पूर्वाग्रह निर्वाण की प्राप्ति में बाधक है । जब ब्राह्मणों को पता चलता है कि बुद्ध ने सभी वर्णों को मोक्ष का अधिकारी बना दिया, तब वे एक समुदाय बनाकर बुद्ध से बहस करते हैं । बुद्ध अपने तर्क द्वारा सभी वर्णों की समानता स्थापित करते हैं । कई तर्कों में से एक तर्क निम्नांकित है—

“क्या केवल ब्राह्मण ही साबुन लगाकर स्नान करके अपने मल को धो सकते हैं ? क्षत्रिय, वैश्य या शूद्र अपने मल को साफ नहीं कर सकते ?”

उत्तर मिलता है - ऐसा नहीं है ।

“अम्बट्ठसुत्त” में बुद्ध ने स्पष्ट रूप से कहा है कि जो कोई वर्ण-पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रसित है वह निर्वाण के मार्ग से बहुत दूर है इस पूर्वाग्रह से मुक्त होकर ही निर्वाण की प्राप्ति की जा सकती है । सभी मनुष्य नैतिक नियम के समक्ष समान हैं । उन्हें उनके कर्मों के अनुसार इनाम या दण्ड मिलता है । मनुष्य की श्रेष्ठता या हीनता को मापनेका एक मानदण्ड है । वह है नैतिक और आध्यात्मिक विकास ।

जैन धर्म और बौद्ध धर्म के प्रभाव के कारण भगवद्गीता में भी स्त्री, वैश्य और शूद्र द्वारा चरम लक्ष्य प्राप्त करने की बात कही गई है ।

निष्कर्ष : वर्ण-व्यवस्था के खण्डन सम्बन्धी उपर्युक्त विचारों से प्रभावित हुए बिना रहना असंभव सा प्रतीत होता है ।

सहायक ग्रंथ सूची :

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|--|---------------------------|
| 1. दीघ निकाय | - सं० भिक्षु जगदीश काश्यप |
| 2. मज्झिम निकाय | - सं० भिक्षु जगदीश काश्यप |
| 3. खुद्दक निकाय | - सं० भिक्षु जगदीश काश्यप |
| 4. ऋग्वेद संहिता | - उमाशंकर शर्मा 'ऋषि' |
| 5. अर्ली बुद्धिज्म एण्ड भगवद्गीता | - काशीनाथ उपाध्याय |
| 6. ह्वाट इज फिलास्फी | - कोरसुनोवा |
| 7. महाकात्यायन का व्यक्तित्व एवं कृतित्व | - कपिलदेव प्रसाद सिंह |

★ ★ ★

जैन एवं बौद्ध धर्म की पृष्ठभूमि में नालंदा

डॉ० विद्यानन्द उपाध्याय

स्नातकोत्तर प्राचीन भारतीय एवं एशियाई अध्ययन
नालंदा कॉलेज, बिहार शरीफ

नालन्दा भारत ही नहीं विश्व स्तर पर अपनी पुरातन सांस्कृतिक धरोहर के लिए विख्यात है। ख्याति प्राप्त प्राचीन नालन्दा विश्वविद्यालय का गौरवमय पुरातात्विक स्थल आज अपनी पुरातन इतिहास को स्मृत कराते हुए देश-विदेश के पर्यटकों के आकर्षण का महत्त्वपूर्ण केन्द्र है।

नालन्दा ने मूलतः पाँचवीं शताब्दी के प्रांगण से बारहवीं शताब्दी ई० तक सम्पूर्ण विश्व को अपने उदात्त ज्ञान-रश्मि से आलोकित करते हुए अपने नाम “ना + अलम + दा” की सार्थकता को सिद्ध किया है।¹ इससे पूर्व से ही यह स्थल भगवान महावीर और भगवान बुद्ध का कर्म स्थल रहा है और उनके प्रिय शिष्यों से संबंधित अनेक प्रकरण नालन्दा और इसके परिसर से सम्बद्ध रहे हैं। इस पृष्ठभूमि में यह माना जा सकता है कि गुप्त काल से सदियों पूर्व नालन्दा जैन एवं बौद्ध धर्म-दर्शन का केन्द्र रहा था। फलस्वरूप जैन एवं बौद्ध साहित्य में नालन्दा की चर्चाएँ भरी पड़ी हैं।² छठी शताब्दी ई० पू० के पहले नालन्दा का उल्लेख नहीं मिलता है। लेकिन छठी शताब्दी ई० पू० से जैन एवं बौद्ध-धर्म की पृष्ठभूमि में इस स्थल की धार्मिक महत्ता बढ़ने लगी। भगवान महावीर ने यहाँ चौदह चौमासा व्यतीत किया था। इस समय यह स्थल बड़गाँव (बाद में बड़गाँव) के रूप में जाना जाता था।³ नालन्दा नाम की प्रसिद्धि पाल शासकों के समय चरम सीमा पर पहुँच गई थी। नालन्दा मूलतः बड़गाँव के नाम से ही जाना जाता था और आज भी वह स्थल जहाँ सूर्य का प्राचीन मंदिर स्थित है, बड़गाँव (या सूरजपुर) के नाम से ज्ञातव्य है। वर्तमान में हिन्दुओं के लिए सूर्य पूजा (छठ व्रत) की दृष्टि से इस स्थान का अपना विशिष्ट महत्त्व है।

जैनियों के लिए यह तीर्थ स्थल है। भगवान महावीर अपना प्रथम चातुर्मास अस्थिक ग्राम में व्यतीत कर गांगेय प्रदेश आकर नालन्दा के तंतुवायशाला में ठहरे थे।⁴ यहीं उन्होंने दूसरा चातुर्मास सम्पन्न किया था जहाँ मंखजातीय मंखलीपुत्र गोशाल से उनकी भेंट हुई थी।⁵ व्याख्या प्रज्ञप्ति के पंद्रहवें शतक में इसकी विस्तृत चर्चा आयी है। बाद में मंखलीपुत्र गोशाल ‘नियतिवाद’ का पक्का समर्थक हो गया। महावीर ने क्रमशः दूसरा, चौतीसवाँ वर्षावास नालन्दा में सम्पन्न किया था। मंखलीपुत्र गोशाल (गोशालक) के द्वारा महावीर के शरण में आना एक महत्त्वपूर्ण घटना थी।

जैन आगमों के अनुसार भगवान महावीर के चौदह हजार श्रमण शिष्य थे। इन्होंने अपनी श्रमण-संस्था को व्यवस्था की दृष्टि से नौ गणों में बाँट दिया था। इसके नियमन के लिए ग्यारह प्रधान शिष्यों को नियत किया गया जो गणधर के नाम से प्रसिद्ध हुए। इन गणधरों में सर्वश्रेष्ठ एवं प्रिय गणधर थे—इंद्रभूति गौतम जो नालंदा के थे और जैनधर्म में महान गणधर गौतम के नाम से हुए। नालंदा के लिए महान् गौरव की बात है कि महावीर के सर्वश्रेष्ठ शिष्य गौतम गणधर और बुद्ध के सर्वश्रेष्ठ शिष्यों में सारिपुत्र मौद्गल्यायन की जन्मभूमि नालन्दा ही थी। 'गणधर' तीर्थंकरों की अर्थरूपी वाणी को संकलन करने वाले होते हैं। आचार्य हेमचंद्र के शब्दों में गणधर उत्तम ज्ञान, दर्शन आदि गुणों से युक्त होते हैं। जैन परम्परा में भगवान महावीर के बाद कोई दूसरा सार्वभौम व्यक्तित्व है तो वह है इंद्रभूति गौतम गणधर। नालंदा के तीन सहोदर भाई—इन्द्रभूति, अग्निभूति और वायुभूति ब्राह्मण पिता की संतान थे। इस समय नालंदा एक समूह उपनगर था। नालंदा में ही 'लेव' नामक एक धनाढ्य गृहस्थ रहता था जो निर्ग्रन्थ प्रवचन का अनुयायी और जैन श्रमणों का परम भक्त था। नालंदा से उत्तर पूर्व दिशा में 'शेषद्रविका' और 'हस्तियाम' नामक उदकशाला तथा उद्यान था जहाँ महावीर और इंद्रभूति गौतम गणधर ने भिन्न विषयों पर चर्चाएँ की थीं।

यह मान्य है कि गणधरों की जन्मभूमि के रूप में नालंदा के प्रति जैन धर्मावलम्बियों के हृदय में असीम श्रद्धा है। वहीं यह स्थल बौद्धों के लिए भी श्रद्धास्थल है। वैसे विश्वप्रसिद्ध शिक्षा केन्द्र (नालंदा विश्वविद्यालय) के रूप में नालंदा को असीम ख्याति मिली। लेकिन बुद्ध के समय से ही यह स्थल पूज्य रहा। राजगृह मगध की राजधानी थी और नालंदा राजगृह से उत्तर एक योजन की दूरी पर स्थित था।¹⁶ तथागत के प्रियशिष्य सारिपुत्र की जन्मभूमि नालन्दा के समीपस्थ ग्राम थी जिसे आज 'सरिचक' के नाम से जाना जाता है।¹⁷ कुछ स्थानों पर आये विवरण के अनुसार 'नालक' या 'नालकग्राम' को भी सारिपुत्र की कर्मभूमि माना गया है।¹⁸ वैसे बौद्ध साहित्य के अनुसार नालंदा को (सरिचक) सारिपुत्र की जन्मभूमि और कर्मभूमि माना गया है।

तथागत प्रायः ही नालंदा में विश्राम हेतु ठहरा करते थे। यह उनकी मूल कर्मभूमि नहीं थी फिर भी यह स्थल बौद्ध-धर्म से प्रभावित था। भगवान बुद्ध के परमप्रिय शिष्य सारिपुत्र और मौद्गल्यायन भी ब्राह्मण कुल के थे जिन्होंने तथागत के साथ शिष्यरूप में रहकर बौद्ध धर्म के प्रचार-प्रसार में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभायी थी। दोनों में प्रगाढ़ मित्रता थी। यह एक धारणा है कि दोनों का जन्म एक ही दिन हुआ था और इन्होंने संन्यासी के रूप में राजगृह में संजय ऋषि के साथ रहना प्रारंभ किया था।

एक दिन राजगृह में अश्वजित नामक बौद्ध भिक्षु ने सारिपुत्र को बुद्ध के बारे में बताया।⁹ सारिपुत्र ने अपने मित्र महामौद्गल्यायन को भी बुद्ध की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बाद में बुद्ध से दीक्षा ले ली। सारिपुत्र के पिता का नाम 'वंगन्त' और माता का नाम 'रूपसारि' था। सारिपुत्र के पिता नालन्दा के प्रतिष्ठित और धनी ब्राह्मण थे।

सारिपुत्र बचपन से ही बड़े मेधावी थे। राजगृह में संजय के आश्रम में मीमांसा शास्त्र का अध्ययन कर लिया था। बौद्ध होने के पश्चात् उन्होंने चार जैन भिक्षुणियों को वैशाली में शास्त्रार्थ में पराजित किया था। पश्चात् सारिपुत्र के परामर्श से वे सभी तथागत की शिष्यायें बनीं।

सारिपुत्र भगवान बुद्ध ने परमप्रिय शिष्यों में थे और वे अपने शिष्य के ज्ञान, साधु-चरित स्वभाव को बहुत अधिक सम्मान देते थे। बुद्ध ने अपने पुत्र राहुल की दीक्षा सारिपुत्र से ही दिलवाई थी और राहुल ने अपना दार्शनिक ज्ञान सारिपुत्र की देख-रेख में ही बढ़ाया था। सही दृष्टि में 'नालन्दा' के इस महान् भिक्षु का संघ में सर्वाधिक प्रभाव था। देवदत्त ने जब बुद्ध के संघ से वज्जिदेश के 500 भिक्षुओं को फोड़ लिया तब बुद्ध की चिन्ता को सारिपुत्र और मौद्गल्यायन ने दूर किया था। इस प्रकार इन दोनों शिष्यों ने बौद्ध संघ में आई दरार को भी समाप्त कर दिया।¹⁰ उन्होंने सतत् संघ की एकता बनाए रखने का प्रयास किया। और सफल भी रहे। अद्भुत विलक्षण मेधाशक्ति वाले सारिपुत्र की प्रशंसा मौद्गल्यायन भी करते थे।¹¹ सारिपुत्र धर्म सेनापति के रूप में थे। ये बौद्ध-दर्शन तथा ब्राह्मण ग्रंथ एवं दर्शन के भी अगाध विद्वान थे। ये निरहंकारी, विनम्र, विनयी, शीलवान थे द्वेष रहित एवं अत्यंत उदारचित्त वाले थे।

महामौद्गल्यायन भगवान बुद्ध के दूसरे प्रियतम शिष्य थे। उन्होंने भी अपने प्रिय मित्र सारिपुत्र के साथ-साथ 44 वर्षों तक बौद्ध धर्म एवं बौद्ध संघ की सेवा की। सारिपुत्र की तुलना में ये अधिक मेधावी थे। अर्हत् प्राप्त करने में जहाँ सारिपुत्र को 21 दिनों का समय लगा था, वहीं महामौद्गल्यायन को मात्र सात दिनों का ही समय लगा था।

सारिपुत्र की मृत्यु के ठीक पंद्रह दिन बाद राजगृह में एक आश्रम में धर्मविद्रोहियों ने अग्रहायण कृष्ण अमावस्या की रात में बड़ी क्रूरता से मौद्गल्यायन की हत्या कर दी।¹² अपने दोनों प्रिय शिष्यों की मृत्यु पर भगवान बुद्ध को असीम वेदना हुई थी। उनकी मृत्यु के पश्चात् छः मास के अन्दर ही भगवान बुद्ध का भी महापरिनिर्वाण हो गया।

नालन्दा के इन दो रत्नों ने बौद्ध संघ की सेवा में महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभायी थी। एक ओर उन्होंने संघ की एकता को बनाए रखा वहीं प्राक के उपदेशों से भी लोगों को लाभान्वित

किया । नालंदा को इन दो पुत्रों पर गर्व था । प्रमुख गणधरों में इन्द्रभूमि आदि तीन भाईयों ने जहाँ जैन धर्म की सेवा की वहीं इन दो मित्रों ने बौद्ध धर्म की सेवा में अपने को समर्पित कर दिया था । बाद में इसी पृष्ठभूमि में यह स्थल बौद्ध शिक्षा का एक प्रमुख केन्द्र बना । यह संयोग की बात रही कि अशोक, कुमार गुप्त, हर्ष एवं पाल शासकों जैसे सशक्त शासकों का संरक्षण नालंदा के शिक्षण-संस्था को प्राप्त हुआ ।

विश्वविद्यालय की स्थापना के पूर्व ही नालंदा बौद्ध धर्म की दृष्टि से एक महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान बन चुका था । राजगृह से पाटलिपुत्र की यात्रा के क्रम में बुद्ध ने अनेकों बार नालंदा के पावारिक आम्रवन में विश्राम किया था ।¹³ वैसे यह एक समृद्ध और धनी आबादी वाला नगर बन चुका था ।¹⁴ इसीलिए यह दीर्घ ग्राम के रूप में ज्ञातव्य हुआ । इसी दीर्घग्राम का अपभ्रंश बाद में बड़गाँव के रूप में हुआ ।¹⁵ बौद्ध-साहित्यों में आए विवरणों से स्पष्ट होता है कि ब्राह्मण बहुल इस प्रदेश की स्थिति बहुत अच्छी थी और भौगोलिक दृष्टि से विस्तृत क्षेत्र में यह व्यवस्थित था । इन्द्रभूति गौतम, पुष्यभूति गौतम और वायुभूति गौतम गणधर तथा सारिपुत्र एवं मौद्गल्यायन धनाढ्य एवं सम्पन्न ब्राह्मणों की ही संतान थे । इतना ही नहीं सभी ग्यारह गणधर ब्राह्मण ही थे ।

अभिधान राजेन्द्र कोष के अनुसार—

“गणधर्म जैनानां वा कुल समुदायो गणः तत्समाचारी गणसमाचार्य” अर्थात् जैनों के कुल समूह गणधर थे और ये उत्तम ज्ञान, दर्शन आदि धर्म-समूह को धारण करने के कारण ही गणधर कहलाए ।

“अनुतरज्ञान दर्शनादि धर्म गणं धरतीति गणधरः”¹⁶ समवायांग सूत्र में इन ग्यारह गणधरों के नाम अंकित हैं—इन्द्रभूति, अग्निभूति, वायुभूति (तीनों सहोदर भाई थे), व्यक्त, सुधर्मा, मंडिक (त), मौर्यपुत्र, अकम्पित, अचलभ्राता, मेतार्य और प्रभास । कल्पसूत्र में गणधरों के नाम, आयु, शिष्य संख्या, माता-पिता, जाति, गोत्र, जन्म स्थान, निर्वाण समय और निर्वाण भूमि का विवरण मिलता है किन्तु इनमें से अधिकांश की उपलब्धियों की जानकारी नहीं मिल पाई है । एक प्रमुख तथ्य है कि सभी ग्यारह गणधरों की निर्वाण भूमि राजगृह थी ।¹⁷ इस क्रम में भी राजगृह जैनियों के प्रमुख तीर्थस्थलों में अपना स्थान रखता है । कल्पसूत्र की वाचना के अनुसार इन्द्रभूति गौतम गणधर भगवान महावीर के श्रेष्ठतम शिष्य थे ।¹⁸ भगवान के प्रमुख संदेश वाहक थे ।¹⁹ भगवती सूत्र में इन्द्रभूति गौतम के गुण का विस्तृत विवरण मिलता है, तदनुरूप ये—सुवर्ण रेखा के और केशर के समान धवलवर्ण वाले, उग्र दीप्त तप्त एवं महातपस्वी, उदार एवं अतिशय गुणवाले थे, ब्रह्मचर्यव्रती थे । पूर्व के ज्ञाता, चार ज्ञान सम्पन्न एवं सर्वाक्षर सन्नीपानी थे ।²⁰ आगमों

से ज्ञात होता है कि इन्द्रभूति गौतम के प्रश्नों के आधार पर ही आगमों की रचना हुई। औपपातिक सूत्र, राजप्रश्नीय सूत्र, जम्बुदीप प्रज्ञप्ति सूर्य प्रज्ञप्ति और भगवती सूत्र के अधिकांश भाग उदाहरण हैं। इनके अतिरिक्त अग्निभूति एवं वायुभूति द्वारा पूछे गए प्रश्नों का भी उल्लेख भगवतीसूत्र में आया है। नालंदा पुत्र इन्द्रभूति का भगवान महावीर के प्रति असीम श्रद्धा, असीम स्नेह था।²¹ इस तथ्य की पुष्टि भगवती सूत्र के एक संवाद से होती है—

“भगवान ने गौतम से कहा था—हे गौतम ! तुम मेरे साथ बहुत समय से स्नेहबद्ध हो। तुमने बहुत समय से मेरी प्रशंसा की है और गौरवगान किया है। हे गौतम ! हमदोनों का परिचय दीर्घकालीन है। तूने दीर्घकाल से मेरी सेवा की है मेरा अनुसरण किया है और मेरे साथ मेरे अनुकूल व्यवहार किया है। हे गौतम ! मरणोत्तर काल में शरीर का विनाश हो जाने पर यहाँ से चलकर हम दोनों समान एकार्थ हो जायेंगे।²² इन्होंने भगवान महावीर के उपदेशों से जिस धारा से आप्लावित किया वह धारा उसी रूप में अनवरत लगभग 250 वर्षों तक चलती रही। वैसे ऐसा लगता है कि गणधरों के निर्वाण के पश्चात् भी नालन्दा सदियों तक जैनियों के लिए एक महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थल बना रहा, यद्यपि इसकी पुष्टि में साहित्यिक एवं पुरातात्विक साक्ष्यों का अभाव सा है। किन्तु नालंदा की खुदाई से प्राप्त ऋषभदेव एवं पार्श्वनाथ की प्राप्त मूर्तियों से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि सोलहवीं शताब्दी में यहाँ जैन धर्म का प्रभाव था।

जहाँ तक बौद्ध धर्म की बात आती है, इस पृष्ठभूमि में भी नालंदा का महत्त्व बुद्ध के समय से ही रहा। बौद्ध साहित्य में नालंदा की बार-बार चर्चाएँ आई हैं, जैसा हमने पीछे के पृष्ठों पर देखा है। नालंदा और राजगृह के मध्य, अम्बलट्टिका एक विहार था, यहीं पर तथागत ने दीघनिकाय के ब्रह्मजाल सुत्त के माध्यम से तत्कालीन समाज पर प्रकाश डाला था।²³ नालंदा में बौद्ध साहित्य के कई सुत्त का उपदेश तथागत ने दिया था। जीवन के अंतिम चरण में जब भगवान बुद्ध ने राजगृह से कुसीनारा (कुशीनगर) के लिए प्रस्थान किया था, उनका पहला पड़ाव अम्बलट्टिका ही था।²⁴ ह्वेनसांग ने लिखा है कि पाँच सौ सौदागरों ने नालंदा को दसकोटि मुद्रा में खरीदकर भगवान बुद्ध को दे दिया था। अशोक के समय तृतीय बौद्ध संगीति के अवसर पर जिन सर्वास्तिवादियों को संघ से निकाल दिया गया था, उन्होंने नालंदा आकर अपनी सभा की, तत्पश्चात् यह नालंदा सर्वास्तिवादियों का गढ़ बना। मौर्य सम्राट अशोक को भी नालंदा सर्वास्तिवादियों का गढ़ बना। मौर्य सम्राट अशोक को भी नालंदा के प्रति स्नेह था। सारिपुत्र चैत्य के समीप अशोक ने एक विहार का निर्माण कराया था।²⁵ तारानाथ के अनुसार नागार्जुन ने यहाँ 108 मंदिरों का निर्माण कराया था। चीनी यात्री फाहियान ने ‘नाल’ नामक ग्राम की चर्चा की है। यह नाल संभवतः नालंदा ही था। नालन्दा राजगृह के कोलहल से दूर था जहाँ

बौद्ध भिक्षुओं के लिए कई बौद्ध विहार बनाए गए।²⁶ ये विहार बड़े पवित्र और अनुशासित थे जो कालक्रम में शिक्षा के केन्द्र के रूप में परिणत होते गए। गुप्त शासकों के प्रारंभिक समय में नालंदा की स्थिति का विस्तृत ज्ञान नहीं हो पाता है लेकिन गुप्त शासकों के समय यह स्थान शिक्षा की दृष्टि से महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान बनने लगा था। गुप्त शासकों ने यहाँ अनेक विहारों का निर्माण कराया था। इनमें शुक्रादित्य, बुद्धगुप्त, तथागतगुप्त, बालादित्य आदि प्रमुख हैं। प्रशासन और सुरक्षा की दृष्टि से गुप्तों का शासन काल स्मरणीय काल रहा है। इसी पृष्ठभूमि में सदियों तक भारतीय सभ्यता संस्कृति का चूड़ांत विकास हुआ। ब्राह्मण दर्शन की विभिन्न विद्याओं की विकसित प्रतिष्ठापना हुई, वहीं बौद्ध-दर्शन के विकास का भी मार्ग प्रशस्त हुआ।²⁷ असंग और वसुवन्धु ने बौद्ध दर्शन की योगाचार स्कूल की स्थापना की। महायान शाखा की अपूर्वप्रगति हुई। इस क्रम में नालंदा तथा इसके आचार्यों की महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका रही थी।

छठी शताब्दी ई०पू० से बारहवीं शताब्दी ई० तक नालंदा ने हिन्दू जैन एवं बौद्ध धर्म की पृष्ठभूमि में अपनी समृद्ध संस्कृति से विश्व को आलोकित किया। निश्चय ही नालंदा भारत की एक सांस्कृतिक धरोहर है। इस नालंदा ने अपने अतीत की गौरवमयी स्मृतियों से भारत की संस्कृति को चमत्कृत किया है। इस क्रम में नालंदा के गणधरों एवं सारिपुत्र, मौद्गल्यायन की सेवा को निश्चय ही सम्मान देना अपनी भारतीय संस्कृति को सम्मानित करना होगा।

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आधुनिक समाज और बौद्ध धर्म

महागुरु नौरबूलामा

आसाम

विश्व के सभी प्रमुख धर्मों का तुलनात्मक अध्ययन करने के पश्चात् हम निश्चित रूप से कह सकते हैं कि बौद्ध धर्म आधुनिक समाज के लिये जितना प्रासंगिक है उतना अन्य कोई धर्म नहीं। बौद्ध धर्म करुणा, दया, मैत्री, भ्रातृत्व, सत्य, अहिंसा और समानता जैसे महान मानवीय सिद्धान्तों पर आधारित है जिनकी आज समाज को अति आवश्यकता है। बौद्ध धर्म बहुत ही व्यवहारिक, विवेकपूर्ण तथा वैज्ञानिक धर्म है जिसमें अन्धविश्वास और पाखंडवाद के लिये कोई स्थान नहीं है। बौद्ध धर्म दूसरे अन्य धर्मों से बिल्कुल भिन्न और अद्वितीय धर्म है, इसकी अपनी अलग विशेषताएँ और पहचान हैं। बौद्ध धर्म की शिक्षाएँ, सिद्धान्त और उपदेश पूर्णतया अपूर्व एवं मौलिक हैं। इसकी शिक्षाएँ आज के युग में सबसे प्रासंगिक, सामयिक एवं उपयोगी हैं, जो समाज के लिए आवश्यक हैं।

बुद्ध ने स्पष्ट रूप से कहा है कि वही मनुष्य सच्चे अर्थ में धार्मिक है जो किसी दूसरे को हानि नहीं पहुँचाता, किसी की निन्दा नहीं करता और जो एक सम्मानीय, शालीन, उदात्त, मर्यादित, प्रभावशाली, निर्दोष एवं पवित्र जीवन बिताता है। बुद्ध ने मोक्ष प्राप्ति के लिये धार्मिक अनुष्ठान, बलि, यज्ञ और आडम्ब्रों का घोर विरोध किया, उनका मत था कि नैतिकता, सदाचार, सत्यनिष्ठा, चित्त की एकाग्रता और पवित्रता ही धार्मिक जीवन के रूप हैं जिससे मनुष्य मोक्ष प्राप्त कर सकता है। उन्होंने मानव को समस्त बुराइयों से दूर रहने की सलाह दी है। उन्होंने हमें मानवीय गुणों का पोषण करने, अच्छे कर्मों को व्यवहार में लाने तथा बिना किसी स्वार्थ के दूसरों की सहायता करने का भी परामर्श दिया है। बौद्ध धर्म बुद्धि और विवेक का धर्म है जो इस संसार में प्रत्येक काम के लिये मनुष्य को ही उत्तरदायी मानता है। बौद्ध धर्म की मान्यता है कि दुख और सुख मनुष्य स्वयं पैदा करता है और वह दुखों को दूर करने की क्षमता भी रखता है। मनुष्य किसी बाहरी शक्ति पर निर्भर रहे बिना अपने विवेक और प्रयास से शान्ति और सुख प्राप्त कर सकता है। बुद्ध ने मनुष्य के आध्यात्मिक विकास के साथ-साथ उसकी सांसारिक प्रगति पर भी जोर दिया है। बुद्ध के उपदेशों का अध्ययन करने पर हम पाते हैं कि उनमें मनुष्य को उद्यमी तथा क्रियाशील बनाने तथा अपनी सम्पन्नता के लिये समय के सदुपयोग करने पर बल दिया गया है। बुद्ध ने कहा है कि मनुष्य को अपने परिवार, सम्बन्धियों, मित्रों, समाज, देश तथा समस्त संसार के प्रति अपने कर्तव्य का पालन करना चाहिये।

बौद्ध धर्म आपस में मिलजुल कर रहने के साथ-साथ काम करने की शिक्षा देता है । यही नहीं बौद्ध धर्म दूसरे धर्मावलम्बियों के साथ सहयोग करने की भी प्रेरणा देता है । शान्ति और सद्भाव के साथ रहने के लिये दूसरों के प्रति उदारवादी होना आवश्यक है । बुद्ध के शान्ति, सहिष्णुता और उदारता के उपदेश अद्वितीय हैं जिनकी आज इस भौतिकवादी विज्ञान के युग में परम आवश्यकता है । जबकि दुनिया के राष्ट्रों में आपसी सम्बन्ध बिगड़ रहे हैं और तनाव बढ़ रहा है, कहा नहीं जा सकता कब युद्ध का सामना करना पड़े जिससे जन-धन की अपार हानि हो जाये क्योंकि आज ऐसे नाभिकीय और अणु-हथियारों का आविष्कार हो चुका है जो क्षण भर में मानव जाति का भयंकर विनाश कर सकते हैं । मानवता के इस विनाश को रोकने के लिये बौद्ध धर्म का शान्तिपूर्ण सह-अस्तित्व का सिद्धान्त ही प्रत्येक राष्ट्र का मार्ग दर्शन कर सकता है ।

बुद्ध संसार में पहले व्यक्ति हुए हैं जिन्होंने मानव के अस्तित्व को स्वीकार किया है और मानव-जाति को सोंच-विचारकर अपने विवेक एवं बुद्धि से काम लेने की पूर्ण स्वतन्त्रता प्रदान की है । उन्होंने अपने अनुयाइयों से कहा कि वे अपनी सद्बुद्धि से सत्य का अन्वेषण करें । कालाम क्षत्रियों को उपदेश देते हुये भगवान बुद्ध ने कहा था “चूँकि लोग ऐसा कहते हैं, अतः इसी बात पर किसी बात को सत्य मत मानो । परम्पराओं को चूँकि वे बहुत प्राचीन हैं और हमारे पूर्वजों से चली आ रही हैं, ऐसा मानकर विश्वास मत करो । मिथ्या प्रचार अथवा मिथ्या विश्वास के आधार पर बातों को मत मानो और इस आधार पर भी कि लोग इस सम्बन्ध में विशेष चर्चा करते हैं । इसलिये भी सत्य मत मानो की किसी प्राचीन ऋषि का लिखित प्रमाण तुम्हारे सामने है अथवा यह तुम्हारे किसी शास्त्र या ग्रन्थ में लिखी हुई है । इस आधार पर भी कि पुराने जमाने से यह बात व्यवहार में आ रही है, सत्य मत मानो । और इसलिये भी सत्य मत मानो कि कहनेवाले का व्यक्तित्व आकर्षक है अथवा तुम्हारे धर्माचार्यों या शिक्षकों ने इसका समर्थन किया है । कालामो, जो बात पूर्ण परीक्षण के बाद तुम्हारे अनुभव व विवेक के आधार पर खरी उतरे अथवा जो तुम्हारी रुचि और रुझान के अनुकूल एवं कल्याणकारी हो एवं अन्य जीवों का भी जिसमें हित हो, उसी बात को तुम सत्य मानो और उसी के आधार पर अपने भविष्य का निर्माण करो ।” धम्मिका सुत्त, धम्माचारिया सुत्त, रत्ता सुत्त, मैत्ता सुत्त, अदित्या सुत्त आदि में भगवान बुद्ध ने भिक्षुओं एवं जनसाधारण के लिये आध्यात्मिक एवं सांसारिक कल्याण का मार्गदर्शन किया है ।

व्यक्ति, समाज और संसार दुखी क्यों है ? क्योंकि संसार स्वार्थी है और अपनी ही भावनाओं में डूबा रहता है । इसलिये आत्मा के परित्याग का सन्देश लेकर भगवान बुद्ध आये ।

उन्होंने अपनी साधना के द्वारा आर्य सत्त्यों का प्रतिपादन किया जो मानव कल्याण के लिये हैं। ये चार आर्य सत्य हैं। 1. दुख, 2. दुख का कारण, 3. दुख निरोध और 4. दुख निरोध की ओर ले जानेवाला मार्ग। भगवान बुद्ध ने केवल एक ही शिक्षा दी है। उन्होंने कहा है कि दुख आर्य सत्य है। जन्म भी दुख है, जरा भी दुख है, रोग भी दुख है, मृत्यु भी दुख है, प्रियों से वियोग भी दुख है, इच्छित वस्तु का न मिलना भी दुख है, मनश्ताप, कष्ट, वेदना, विलाप आदि सभी दुख हैं। भगवान बुद्ध का मानव जीवन के सम्बन्ध में व्यापक दृष्टिकोण इतना सुस्पष्ट, सत्य और अविरोधात्मक है कि इसकी व्याख्या की आवश्यकता नहीं। यदि संसार में दुख या असामंजस्य ही न होता तो हमें किसी धर्म की आवश्यकता ही न होती। जैसे कोई वैद्य रोगी का निदान करके रोग का पता लगाता है तदनुसार उसे औषधि बतलाता है वैसे ही सांसारिक रोगों से ग्रस्त मानवरूपी रोगी को भगवान बुद्ध ने आवश्यक औषधि बतला दी थी और वह औषधि आध्यात्मिक मार्ग है जिसे मध्यम मार्ग के नाम से भी जाना जाता है। यह मार्ग आत्मशुद्धि करनेवाला और ज्ञान अर्जित करनेवाला है। इस मार्ग पर चलने से समस्त दुखों का अन्त हो जाता है। यह वह मार्ग है जो व्यक्ति को स्वतन्त्र विचारक और कुशल कर्मी तो बनाता ही है उसका नैतिक और मानसिक विकास भी करता है। इसलिये इस मध्यम मार्ग को बुद्ध ने आँख देनेवाला, ज्ञान करानेवाला और शक्ति देनेवाला कल्याणकारी मार्ग घोषित किया है। पंचशील का पालन करने और आध्यात्मिक मार्ग का अनुसरण करने से व्यक्ति के अन्दर सद्गुणों का अविर्भाव होता है। बौद्ध धर्म में समस्त बुराइयों का शमन करने तथा विभिन्न समस्याओं के समाधान के लिये चार ब्रह्म बिहारों का प्रावधान है जो 1. मैत्री, 2. करुणा, 3. मुदिता और 4. उपेक्षा के नाम से जाने जाते हैं। सामाजिक जीवन में समरसता और सद्भाव लाने के लिये चार लोकसेवाओं का वर्णन है जिन्हें कतु-संघा-बल्लु कहते हैं। ये चार लोकसेवायें हैं। 1. दान, 2. प्रिय वचन, 3. अर्थचारिया और 4. समानता।

अपने मानवीय चरित्र एवं गुणों से परिपूर्ण होने के कारण ही बौद्ध धर्म का विश्व में इतना प्रचार-प्रसार हुआ कि उसकी तुलना किसी अन्य धर्म से नहीं की जा सकती। भारत की सीमाओं को लांघकर बौद्ध धर्म न केवल एशिया के समस्त देशों में बल्कि यूरोप, अमेरिका और आस्ट्रेलिया महाद्वीपों में पहुँच चुका है और फलफूल रहा है। आज अमेरिका में बौद्ध धर्म वहा का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा धर्म है। बुद्ध की शिक्षाओं के प्रति लोगों का आकर्षण दिन-प्रति-दिन बढ़ रहा है। यह इस बात का प्रतीक है कि आज के समाज में बौद्ध धर्म ही सबसे अधिक प्रासंगिक है।

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आधुनिक समाज में बौद्ध धर्म की प्रासंगिकता

प्रो० ब्रह्मदेव नारायण शर्मा

अध्यक्ष

पालि एवं थेरवाद विभाग

सम्पूर्णानन्द संस्कृत विश्वविद्यालय, वाराणसी

बौद्धधर्म ने समाज तथा मानव संस्कृति के विकास में महत्त्वपूर्ण योगदान किया है। यह धर्म केवल रुढ़ियों और रीति-रिवाजों का परिपालन मात्र नहीं है वरन् जीवन से जुड़ा एक सर्जनात्मक सर्वदेशीय तत्त्व है। यह प्राणिमात्र को वास्तविक सुख एवं शान्ति का संदेश देता है। मिथ्याइयान और अज्ञानता को अपाकृत कर सत्य ज्ञान और न्याय को प्रगट करता है। आचरण की शुद्धता को सर्वोच्च आदर्श स्वीकार करता है। सभी अकुशल कर्मों का त्याग, सम्पूर्ण कुशल कर्मों का संचयन और चित्त की निर्मलता के द्वारा व्यक्ति एवं समाज को सर्वदा सन्मार्ग पर चलने की प्रेरणा देता है¹। यह धर्म शान्ति, सद्भाव, मैत्री, समता एवं करुणा का सन्देश देता है। बहुजनहिताय एवं बहुजनसुखाय के लिए प्रेरित करता है²। शील, समाधि, प्रज्ञा की भावना का उद्रेक करता है। अहिंसा, अस्तेय, ब्रह्मचर्य एवं सत्य का सम्बल प्रदान करता है। इन धार्मिक मूल्यों के आचरण से व्यक्ति और समाज का उत्थान एवं विकास सम्भव हो सकता है। कुछ लोगों की धारणा है कि बौद्धधर्म सामाजिक व्यवस्थाओं के सम्बन्ध में उदासीन है। यह धर्म सामज से निर्लिप्त भिक्षुसंघ के लिए ही है। पर त्रिपिटक के ऐसे अनेक सूत्र हैं जिसमें सामाजिक व्यवस्थाओं से सम्बन्धित महत्त्वपूर्ण विचार प्राप्त होते हैं। यथा सिंगालोवादसूत्त, वसलसूत्त, पराभवसूत्त, सुन्दरिकभारद्वाजसूत्त आदि। इन सूत्रों को देखने से यह बात स्पष्ट होती है कि भगवान् बुद्ध ने समाज के विकास के लिए, समाज में समानता स्थापित करने के लिए कितने प्रयासरत थे। अतः उपर्युक्त धारणा निर्मूल हो जाती है। कोई भी आदर्श धार्मिक मूल्य व्यक्ति और समाज के लिए कल्याणप्रद होता है। क्या बौद्धधर्म के सत्य, अहिंसा, मैत्री एवं करुणा समाज के लिए हितकारी नहीं है। क्या पंचशील समाजसुधार के लिए आवश्यक नहीं है? निश्चित रूप से बौद्धधर्म ने मानव समाज को सम्यक्दिशा प्रदान किया है। मानव समाज को सुख एवं शान्ति का मार्ग बतलाया है। इस धर्म ने सबको समान अधिकार दिया है। चाहे ब्राह्मण हो या क्षत्रिय, वैश्य हो या शूद्र सभी को स्वचिन्तन एवं मुक्ति प्राप्त करने का समान अधिकार है। कोई भी व्यक्ति मात्र गोत्र अथवा धन से श्रेष्ठ नहीं होता वरन् श्रेष्ठता तो उसके सत्कर्म, विद्या,

धर्म एवं शील से प्राप्त होता है³। साधना, समानता, सच्चरित्रता तथा पुरुषार्थ बौद्धधर्म की मूल विशेषताएँ हैं। मैत्री, करुणा, मुदिता एवं उपेक्षा आदि धार्मिक मूल्य विश्व समाज के लिए कल्याणकर है⁴।

ऊपर जिन धार्मिक मूल्यों का उल्लेख किया गया है उसका स्वरूप किसी जाति या राष्ट्र विशेष तक ही सीमित नहीं है, वरन् विश्वजनीन भावना से मुक्त है। विश्वबन्धुत्व की भावना से आप्लावित है और मानव मात्र के कल्याण का मार्ग प्रशस्त करता है। काम, क्रोध, लोभ, अहंकार, द्वेष, घृणा, स्वार्थ आदि अकुशल भावों को समाप्तकर प्रेम, सद्भाव, सहानुभूति सहयोग, सेवा, त्याग, समानता एवं उपकार आदि कुशल भावों को विकसित करता है। इसीलिए विश्वसमाज ने इसे आत्मसात कर जीवन के प्रत्येक क्षेत्र को इससे अनुप्राणित किया है। इस दिशा में श्रीलंका, बर्मा, थाईलैण्ड, कम्बोडिया, लाओस, नेपाल, भूटान, तिब्बत, चीन, कोरिया, जापान आदि देशों का जनजीवन उल्लेख्य हैं। जिनमें बौद्धधर्म की ज्योति प्रज्वलित है तथा सामाजिक समरसता एवं शान्ति के आलोक से आलोकित है।

भगवान बुद्ध ने शील को सभी कुशल धर्मों का आधार बताया है⁵। वे जब कभी उपदेश देते हैं तो शीलकथा, स्वर्गकथा से लेकर बुद्धों को समुन्नीत करनेवाले धर्मों की देशना देते हैं। त्रिपिटक में अनेक स्थलों पर शील का विस्तार से वर्णन मिलता है। सामान्य मनुष्य के लिए पंचशील तथा वीतराग भिक्षुओं के लिए अन्य अनेक प्रकार के शील निर्दिष्ट हैं। इनमें पंचशील सामान्य जन के लिए अत्यन्त उपादेय है तथा समाज के लिए अत्यन्त कल्याणकर हैं। अहिंसा, त्याग, ब्रह्मचर्य, सत्यवचन तथा मादकद्रव्य का परिवर्जन पंचशील है। इन मूल्यों का आधुनिक समाज के परिवर्तन में तथा समाजोत्थान में क्या योगदान हो सकता है, यह विवेच्य है।

अहिंसा— सभी प्राणियों को आत्मोपम समझकर मन, वचन एवं कर्म से अहनन एवं असंधात अहिंसा है। “पाणातिपाता वेरमणी सिक्खापदं समादियामि” “पाणातिपाता पटिविरतो होति”, जीवहिंसा से विरत रहने की शिक्षा ग्रहण करता हूँ। हिंसा से विरत होता है। आदि वाक्यों के द्वारा अहिंसा पर प्रकाश डाला गया है। सभी प्राणियों के प्रति प्रेम और मैत्री अहिंसा का आचरण है। हिंसा का मूल द्वेष है और द्वेषचित्र प्रतिहिंसा के रूप में अभिव्यक्त होता है जिससे अनेक अनर्थ होते हैं। जहाँ मैत्री होगी वहाँ अहिंसक चेतना से प्राणियों के प्रति प्रेम और सद्भावना स्थापित होगी। इसलिए मैत्री परहित कामता है और द्वेष, द्रोह निःस्सरण है। मैत्रीभावना का बौद्धधर्म में सर्वाधिक महत्त्व है। अनेक उपदेशों में भगवान बुद्ध ने मैत्री विहार की प्रशंसा की है। अहिंसा ही जीवन-यापन की पर्यवदात विधा है। इससे समाज में एक दूसरे के प्रति सद्भावना, सुख-दुःख में सहभागिता तथा सार्वजनिक जीवन की उदात्त भावना का उद्रेक होता है। तपःपूत भारत सर्वदा विश्व के साथ मैत्री-भावना से अभिसम्बद्ध रहा है। आज

विश्वनिश्चित अस्त्रों एवं प्राणविधातक शस्त्रों की प्रतिस्पर्धा और प्रतियोगिता की चरमसीमा पर दृष्टिगत हो रहा है। सम्पूर्ण मानव-समाज शस्त्रों की विधातक विभीषिका से अपने के असुरक्षित अनुभूत कर रहा है। सर्वत्र अशान्ति का वातावरण संव्याप्त है; यदि ऐसी विघटनशील स्थिति में पंचशील में से प्रथम को जीवन में आचरित एवं उपयोजित किया जाय तो इस प्रत्यासन्न सामाजिक संकट को निराकृत किया जा सकता है। अतः भगवान बुद्ध द्वारा देशित “पाणातिपाना वेरमणी” शिक्षापद आज भी कितना उपादेय हो सकता है; इसका सहज ही अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है। अतः अहिंसा आचरणीय है। इससे द्वेषबुद्धि का निरसन तथा प्रेम एवं मैत्री का संचारण संभाव्य है और इसी से विश्वबन्धुत्व और विश्वप्रेम की भावना परिकल्प्य है⁶। इसीसे समाज में निर्भयता और पारस्परिक सद्भाव की उद्भावना हो सकती है⁷। अवैर, अद्रोह की भावना से संचेतित एवं सर्वत्र हिंसक-प्रवृत्तियों के विनाश से भारत पुनः सर्वत्र शान्ति स्थापित करने में सक्षम एवं सफल काम हो सकता है। अहिंसा सम्पूर्ण धर्मों का सार है⁸।

“अदिन्नादाना वेरमणी” पंचशील का द्वितीय चरण है जो स्तेयबुद्धि-साहित्य है। त्याग की भावना भारतीय संस्कृति का मूल है। परिग्रह दौःशील्य है और अपरिग्रह सर्वथा स्तुत्य और प्रशंस्य आचरण है। परिग्रह के कारण समाज में सम्पन्नता एवं विपन्नता व्याप्त है। त्याग भावना के अभाव में समाज में एकान्तिक सम्पन्नता एवं विपन्नताजनित वैषम्य व्याप्त है। ऐसी विषम एवं भयावह परिस्थिति में यदि प्रत्येक व्यक्ति आदिन्नादायी और दिन्नप्रतिकांक्षी हो तो निश्चय ही समानता एवं सम्भूयता आ सकती है और सामाजिक वैषम्य उपाकृत हो सकता है। अतः “अदिन्नादाना वेरमणी” शील का प्रचार-प्रसार एवं आचरण करने की आवश्यकता है। समानता का जीवन तभी उपलब्ध हो सकता है जब तथागत प्रवेदित विचारों को जीवन में आचरित किया जाय। आज के समाज में आर्थिक विषमता सर्वत्र दिखाई पड़ती है। किसी को अपार सम्पत्ति एवं सुख है तो बहुतेरे को भोजन वस्त्र भी प्राप्त नहीं होते। यदि लोभ और परिग्रह की भावना को समाप्त किया जा सके तो अवश्य इस आर्थिक-विषमता को समाप्त किया जा सकता है। इसके लिए आवश्यक है कि बुद्ध प्रवेदितशील का पालन किया जाय तथा त्याग की भावना के महत्त्व को समाज में प्रतिपादित किया जाय। संग्रह की प्रवृत्ति का हास और वितरण व्यवस्था को सही बनाने से यह सम्भव हो सकता है।

ब्रह्मचर्य पंचशील का तृतीय चरण है। “अब्रह्मचरिया वेरमणी सिक्खापदं समादियामि”⁹ अर्थात् ब्रह्मचर्य का आचरण करने की शिक्षा ग्रहण करता हूँ। भगवान बुद्ध ने ब्रह्मचर्य को सर्वोपरि एवं सर्वातिशायी माना है। ब्रह्मचर्य किसी भी समाज या राष्ट्र का बल और उत्साह का द्योतक

है। ब्रह्मचर्य के अभाव में अराजकता, दुःशीलता, जनसंख्या वृद्धि जैसी विश्वव्यापी समस्याओं ने समाज को पर्याकुल एवं संक्षुब्ध कर दिया है। जहाँ की नारियाँ संपूजित, सत्कृत एवं समादृत रही हैं, वहाँ की नारियाँ आज परतंत्र एवं भयभीत हैं। जनसंख्याविवृद्धि का परिणाम अत्यन्त भयावह है। इसका एकमात्र निदान संयम तथा ब्रह्मचर्य का आचरण है। सम्यक्-प्रयत्न के द्वारा इस ब्रह्मचर्य के आचरण से जनसंख्याविवृद्धि जैसी समस्या का समाधान हो सकता है।

‘मुसावादा वेरमणी’¹⁰ यह पंचशील का चतुर्थ महत्त्वपूर्ण अंग है। असत्यवचन से विरत रहना ही इसका अभिप्राय है। प्रायः सभी महापुरुषों ने सत्य की महिमा का गुणगान किया है। सत्य ही शिव और सुन्दर में परिणति प्राप्त करता है। “भूतं भूततो अभूतं अभूततो यथातथं विज्ञापनं सच्चं” सत्य यथातथ्य एवं यथाभूत को प्रतिपादित करता है। सत्यवचन-श्रवणपथ में अप्रिय प्रतीत होते हुए भी सर्वदा हितकर है, जीवन की सुखद समरसता का उद्भावक है और असत्य व्यापादवृत्ति का जनक है। अतः मनुष्य को यथावाची तथाकारी तथा यथाकारी तथावाची होना श्रेयस्कर है। यदि मनुष्य सत्य का परिपालन करता है तो अपना तथा समाज का अत्यन्त कल्याण करता है। सत्यभाषी सर्वदा उचित, सार्थक, आपस में मेल और प्रेम बढ़ानेवाला होता है। फलस्वरूप वह कोई भी अनुचित कार्य से अपने को बचाता है। अतः सत्य ही श्रेष्ठ है ऐसा समझकर सत्य का अनुगमन करना चाहिए। महात्मा गाँधी ने सत्य और अहिंसा के अस्त्र से देश को स्वतंत्रता दिलाई। आज भारत को गाँधी की आवश्यकता है जो सत्य एवं अहिंसा के प्रयोग को जीवन में ग्रहण कर समाज को अराजकता, हिंसा, भ्रष्टाचार आदि से मुक्त कराने में समर्थ हो सके। अतः ‘मुसावादावेरमणी’ रूप शील को अपने जीवन में अपनाने की आवश्यकता है।

‘सुरामेरयमज्जप्पमादङ्गाना वेरमणी’¹¹ पंचशील का पाँचवा अंग है। जिसका अर्थ मद्यपान विरमण होता है। मादक द्रव्यों के सेवन से मनुष्य प्रमत्त एवं विवेक विरहित हो जाता है। मन के प्रमत्त हो जाने के कारण वह अपना और समाज को अत्यधिक हानि पहुँचाता है। मद्यपायी की चेतना विघटित हो जाती है और मद्यपोषक द्रव्यों के क्रय के कारण आर्थिक विपन्नता घेर लेती है। आज के समाज में विशेषकर युवावर्ग में मद्यपान के कारण अवांछित उच्छृङ्खलता समाहित हो गई है। यहाँ तक कि जीवनहानि के समाचार अनुदिन प्राप्त होते रहते हैं। कोई विषय भी भयावह वस्तु जीवन में है तो वह है मद्यपान। अतः ‘मद्यपान से विरति’ शील का पालन श्रेयस्कर जीवन के उदात्तीकरण के लिए नितान्त उपादेय है।

उपर्युक्त पंचशील आज के समाज को सम्यक् दिशा प्रदान करने में पूर्णतया समर्थ है। विश्वबन्धुत्व और विश्वप्रेम का एकमात्र यही सम्यक् साधन है। इसके आचरण से प्रतिस्पर्धा

और प्रतिहिंसा की भावना सर्वथा नष्ट हो सकती है। आज विश्व समाज के लिए इसका आचरण अत्यन्त उपादेय हो सकता है, जिससे विश्वशान्ति की स्थापना हो सकती है। अतः पंचशील का प्रयोगात्मक प्रचार-प्रसार की आवश्यकता है।

उपर्युक्त विवरणों से यह स्पष्ट है कि भगवान् बुद्ध ने जिस धर्म की शिक्षा दी, वह अपने व्यवहार पक्ष में मैत्री एवं करुणा से सदा ही बैंधी रही। सभी स्थावर और जंगल प्राणियों को वह मैत्रीभावना से ओत-प्रोत करता रहा है तथा उनके साथ पारस्परिक सामंजस्य और कल्याण की भावना की स्थापना में ही उसने परमार्थ के दर्शन किये हैं। समन्वय, त्याग, वैराग्य आदि धर्म भारतीय संस्कृति और धर्म के मूलमंत्र रहे हैं। जिनकी सामाजिक अभिव्यक्ति कभी संकुचित नहीं रही है, वरन् विश्वजनीनता की भावना से आप्लावित रही है। सर्वलोकहित ही भारतीय चिन्तन का गन्तव्य स्थान रहा है। भवतु सब्बमंगलं की भावना हमारे सामाजिक जीवन को सदा प्रेरणा देती रही है। परस्पर एक दूसरे को प्रसन्न करते हुए तुम परम कल्याण को पाओगे, ऐसी सामाजिक अनुभूति सम्भवतः भारत में ही सर्वप्रथम की गई। कालान्तर में इस भावना के आहत और विकृत होने पर चारों वर्णों के शुद्धी¹² के द्वारा सम्यक् सम्बुद्ध ने विशुद्धिकरण का प्रयत्न किया तथा मैत्रीभावना की विमलधारा से सम्पूर्ण प्राणियों का आप्लावित करने का सन्देश दिया। मैत्री और सर्वकल्याणमयी वृत्ति के लिए बुद्धशासन में जो महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान है, उसके विषय में अधिक कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं है। तथागत ने तो संक्षेपतः अहिंसा को ही 'धर्म' कहा है¹³। मैं अपनी इस जीवनविधि से किसी को भी हानि न पहुँचाऊँ, न चर को, न अचर को¹⁴ यही भगवान् बुद्ध की सदा भावना रहती थी, और ऐसा ही करने के लिए उन्होंने उपदेश दिया। वे स्वयं भी सम्यक् सम्बोधि प्राप्त करने के उपरान्त अपने परिनिर्वाण के अन्तिम क्षणों तक अमृतोपम धर्मोपदेश करते हुए सदा लोकहित में ही लगे रहे। इस प्रकार बौद्धधर्म बहुजन की मंगलकामना से अनुप्राणित है। इसके सामने बहुजन की समस्या है। संसार में दुःख व्याप्त है, सब कुछ जल रहा है, सभी पीड़ित है¹⁵ ? अतः इस व्यापक दुःख को कैसे दूर किया जाय, इसकी चिन्ता है। इसीलिए भगवान् बुद्ध ने चार आर्यसत्त्यों के द्वारा इस व्यापक दुःख को दूर करने का निदान बताया। यदि हम सब महाकारुणिक शास्त्र द्वारा बताये धर्म का अनुसरण करें तो निश्चय ही दुःख नष्ट हो जायेंगे। धर्म तो अकालिक और एहिपस्सिक है, अतः यह काल से परे है, सभी काल में यदि इसे धारण करें तो निश्चय ही कल्याण का मार्ग प्रशस्त होगा। भगवान् बुद्ध का और धर्म के शरण में जाने से समाज में समानता स्थापित हो सकती है। और सबका कल्याण हो सकता है।

भवतु सब्बमंगलं

संदर्भ

1. सब्बपापस्स अकरणं कुसलस्स उपसम्पदा ।
सचित्तपरियोदपनं एतं बुद्धान सासनं ॥ ध० प० पृ० 102
2. चरथ भिक्खवे चारिकं बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय लोकामुकम्पाम अत्थाम हिताय सुखाच्च
देवमनुस्सानं ति । म०व०
3. कम्मं विज्जा च धम्मो च सीलं जीवितमुत्तमं ।
एतेन मच्चा सुज्झन्ति न गोतेन धनेनवा ॥ सु०नि०
4. मेत्ता, करुणा, मुदिता, उपेक्खा चेति इमा चतस्सो अय्यमज्जायो नाम ! ब्रह्मविहारा ति
चि वुच्चन्ति । अ०ध० से पृ० 881. वि०सु०म० पृ०
5. “सीलं सब्बेसं कुसलानं धम्मनं आधारो” । वि०म०
अयं पतिट्ठा धरणीव पाणिनं इदं च मूलं कुसलाभिनुडिया ।
मुखं चिदं सब्बजिनानुसासने, यो सीत्यक्खन्धो वरपातिमोक्खो” ति, वि०म०
6. “सुखिनो वा खेमिनो होन्तु, सब्बे सत्ता भवन्तु सुखितन्ता” । सु० नि० 1, 8
7. “सब्बा दिसा अनुपरिगम्म चेतसा, नेवज्झगा पियतरमत्तना क्वचि ।
एवं पियो पुयु अत्ता परेसं, तस्मा न हिंसे परमत्तकामो” । सं०नि० 3, 1, 8 उ० 5, 1
8. “धर्म समासतोऽहिंसा वर्णयन्ति तथागता (चतुः शतक)
“सर्वेषु भूतेषु दया हि धर्मः” बु० च० 917.
9. यो पाणमतिपातेति मुसावादं च भासति ।
लोके अदित्रं आदियति परदारं च गच्छति ॥
सुरामेश्यपानं च यो नरो अनुयुज्जति ।
इधेवमेसो लोकस्मिं मूलं खणति अत्तनो ॥ ध०प० पृ० 135
“देसेथ भिक्खवे धम्मं केवलं परिपुण्णं ब्रह्मचरियं पकासेथ । म०व०
10. मुसावादं पहाय मुसावादा पटिविरतो समज्ये गोतमो सच्च-वादी सच्च-सन्धो येतो
पच्चयिको अविसंवादको लोकस्सा’ ति । दी० नि० पृ० 5

11. ??
12. न जच्या वसलो होति, न जच्या होति ब्राह्मणो ।
कम्मुना वसलो होति, कम्मुना होति ब्राह्मणो ॥ सु०नि०
“विज्जाचरणसम्यन्नो, सो सेट्ठो देवमानुसो” । दी०नि०, अम्बड्ड सुत्त ।
13. धर्म समासतोऽहिंसा वर्णयन्ति तथागताः । चतुः शतक
‘सर्वेषुभूतेषु दया हि धर्मः’ बु०च० (9199)
14. ‘इमायाहं इरियाय न किञ्चि व्यावाधेमि, तसं वा थावरं वा’
15. “सब्बं आदित्तं, केन आदित्तं, रागग्निा, दोसाग्निा, मोहग्निा” ति । म०व० ।

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“BUDDHĀNASĀSANAPACCUPPANASA- MAKĀLAVATTISAṄGATASABBAGAṆAPA- RISĀNUKULATTAM’

Bidhan Roy Barua

Sabbappaṭhamam ratanattayam sacittena abhivādetvā cā’ ti ayam yathāvutto inbbandho racito likhiyo yena kho addhā yathāvuttana bhikkhusaṅghappiyena-cā’ti.

Imasmim paṭhavībhūmaṇḍalaloke so hi sabbappaṭhamam abhisambuddho’ hosi’ti ca. Y’eva manussaloke sabbasamūhadukkham ñatvā visesato cattāri diṭṭhanimittarūpadukkham abhiññāya ca tato dukkhato muttim labhitum adhippāyena sakim so rājaputto siddhatthakumāro sirigabbhe’va sayantamān’ativappiyatamaputtadāram antimaṃ loketvā ca rājappasādato timirarattiyam abhinikkhamitvā anagāriko anagāriyam (isibhūtāvathāyam cārikaṃ caramāno) uppannamūladukkhagavesanto’va gacchante Kāle chavassā’titagatā’hesuñeā’ti.

Tato param Nirañjanā nadiyā tīrato avidūre uruvelāyam aññatarabodhirukkhāmūle vesākhapunṇimāsiyam antimayāmappatūsasamaye yaṃ taṃ gave sitaṃ yathicchitaṃ sammasambodhiṃ pāpunitvā manussalokasabbasamūha dukkham pāpuñcitvā vimuttisukham nacchi akari c’evā’ti.

Itihāsikakātaniṇṇayānugat’ānusārena tato Kālato paṭṭhāya 25.38 buddha vassā’ titagatāhesuñca yāvajjatanā ca pamuccati. Udāhu chabbīsatime buddhavassa sutake vā vīsatime khittavassasatake vā tena bhagavatā arahatā sammāsambuddhena bahujana hitāya bahujana sukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya lokavasantānaṃ bahunnaṃ

manussānaṃ sabbajanānaṃ desitappakāśitasaddhammo'ti ajjā'pi manussaloke saṃvijjati'ti passīyati cā'ti.

Y'eva abhisambuddho'ti tena Kāruṇikalokanāthena sabbaviññūnā sabbāvidūnā arahantina bhagavantam sammāsambuddhena gavesitadhammo'ti ayameva dhammo yathā ca paramatthato paṭipattidiṭṭhadhammanibbānavādā'ti.

Y'eva dhammadisanā'ti sabbappaṭhamam bāsānasiyaṃ isipatane migadāye vasantānaṃ isīnaṃ pañcavaggīyāmaṃ anuttaradhammacakka-ppavattana pravattita sutta desanā vitthā-rena desitappakāśitā'hosī't ca Imāni visesato cattāri ariyasaccā-nippatitth'ā pitani hontī'ti ca seyyathīdam.

(1) Dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaññea yathā-Idaṃ hi vaṇṇitaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccan'ti evaṃ vuttaññea-seyyathidam.

(i) Jātipi dukkhā

(ii) Jarāpi dukkhā

(iii) byādhipi dukkhā

(iv) maraṇampi dukkhaṃ,

(v) sokaparidevedukkhadomanass'upāyāsāpi dukkhā

(vi) appiyehi sampayogo dukkho

(vii) piyehi vippayogo dukkho

(viii) yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ

(ix) saṃkhittena pañeapādānakkhandhā dukkhā'ti ca pavuccati.

(2) Dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ

(3) Dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ

(4) Dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā ariyasaccañnea

Imā yathāvuttasabbasamuhadukkhato muttiyaṃ labhitamhi anusittho aṭṭhaṅgikamaggo tadānusārena paramatthato satataṃ ācaritabbo c'evāti na ca aññā cā'ti.

Ime yathāvutte aṭṭhaṅgikamagge'va tīṇi bhāgavibhattā hontī'tica
yathā

(i) sammā diṭṭhi

(c) Paññā

(ii) sammā sankappo

(iii) sammā vācā

(iv) sammā kamanto

(a) Sīlaṃ

(v) sammā ājivo

(vi) sammā vāyāmo

(vii) sammā sati

(b) Samādhi

(viii) sammā samādhi

Atha ca kho (a) Sīlaṃ (iii) Sammāvācā (iv) Sammā-kamanto
(v) Sammā ājivo cā'ti patitthāpitaṇca. (b) Samādhī'ti (vi) Sammāvāyāmo
(vii) Sammā sati (viii) Sammā samādhi ca. (c) paññā'ti tath'eva
(i) Sammādiṭṭhi (ii) Sammāsankappo cā'ti patitthāpito ca.

Atha paraṃ imesaṃ yathāvuttānaṃ aṭṭhaṅgikamaggānaṇṇica
yathā (iii) Sammā vācā (iv) Sammā Kamanto (v) sammā ājivo'ti ime tisso
yathā-vutta maggā vānvasena sīlaṃ hi idaṃ kathitaṃ vitthārena
vaṇṇitaṇeā'ti.

Iminā yathāvuttena sīlena saddhiṃ pañcasiam pi diṭṭhanti.
Yameva sīlaṃ aṭṭhaṅgikamaggasu tatiya-catuttha-pañcamavaṇṇitamaggā
antokatā hontī sammāvasena cā'ti.

Evam vuttaṇti ca yathā—imasmiṃ paṭhavī bhūmandalaloke
vasantānaṃ sabbajanānaṃ sabbamanussānaṃ sabba-purisānaṃ majjhe
mṛataṅkaṃ nirupadda-vena santiyā atthāya vasitamhi yathāvuttaṃ
sīlamaggaṃ samiggahitvā annuvijjivā paccavekkhitvā sammāvasena
avassaṃ abhiṇham ācāntabbaṇcā'ti.

Paranc'aparam ayaṃ hi lókaṃtiniyama-sadācarasanantanasīla-
 dhammo'ti Buddhānasāsane viśesena sabbappaṭhamam yathāvuttam
 sīlam hi vilthārena sammā-vasena vaṇṇitañcā'ti imasmim lokikaloke
 sīlena vinā na ca kho ko jri yo koci manusso vā manussā vā sukhena
 yathā-sukham yathāphāsukam nirātāṅkam nimpaddavena-varitum
 sakkonti'ti ca.

Tasmātiha visuddhamagge evampi vuttañca seyyathīdam—

sīlena sugatiṃ yanti

sīlena bhogasampadā

sīlena nibbutiṃ yanti'.

Tasma ca sīlam visodhaye,

Athā ca kho-sabbalokahitattāyā sabba-manussānam maṅgalāya,
 atthāya nidittha-vannita-38 attha-timsati desritamaṅgalameva maṅgala-
 sutte evampi vuttañca yathā—

(i) Ssevanāca bālānam

panditānañca sevanā,

pūjā ca pūjanīyānam

etam maṅgalamuttamam.

(ii) Bahu saccañca sippañca

vinayo ca susikkhito,

subhāsītā ca yā vāca

etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam.

(iii) Mātā pitu upatthānam

puttadārassa saṅgaho,

anākulā ca kammanā

etam maṅgalamuttamam,

(iv) Arati virati pāpā
majjapānā ca saññāmo,
appamādo ca dhammesu
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam.

(v) Gāravo ca nivāto ca
santutthī ca Kataññūtā
Kālena dhammasavanam
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam.

Karaṇiyamettāmtte'va evampi vaṇṇitañca yathā—

(i) Na paro param nikubbetha
Nāti maññetha Katltha ceinaṃ Kiñci,
byārosanā paṭighassaññā
nāññamaññassadukkhamiccheyya.

(ii) Mātā yathā niyaṃ puttam
āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe,
evampi sabbabhūtesu
mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam.

Yathāvutta-anusitthamettasuttamānusa-rena mettābhāvanā avassam
kattabbā'ti ca mettābhāvanāyaṃ mettāyitamhi katamhi yathā ca
phalavasena yo ko ci so have evaṃ anubhavati'ti parañcaparam bhīyoso
so ettāvata ca mettāyati anukumpati na ca kevalam sabbappāṇi-naṃ
sabbapaṇam sabbasattanam sabbabhutanam api ca pana sabbamanu-
ssānam sabbapurisānam sabbajanānañcā'ti yo koci mettāvi-hārī hoti'ti na
ca kho so mettābhāvanāya atthāya kampi vā bhūtampi himsat'tina ca kho
himsam kātum sakkoti'ti ca. Tena hetunā ca phalavasena imasmim
manussaloke ahimsābhūtāvattāyaṃ visesatlo me-ttāyitvā sabbabhūtānam
tath'eva sabbajanā-gaṇaparisānam majjhe sabbe sukhena yathāsukham
yathāphāsukam nirātāṅkam nirupaddavena santiyā atthāya mettābhāva-

nāyaṃ vasitum sakkonti'ti. Idaṃ hi yathā-vuttaṃ aniditthaṃ anusitthaṃ
paccakhekkhitaṃ paṭipannaṃ anusī-ḷaṇabuddhānasāsanāñcā'ti.

Buddhānasāsanānusitth'ante dhamma-pade evampi kathitaññea
yathā—

sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ

kusalassa upasampadā,

sacittapariyodapanam

etaṃ buddhānasāsanam.

ciraṃ tiṭṭhaṭu saddhammo.



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